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By

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PREFACE

It used to be assumed that Philosophy lay in a trance for more than a thousand years, from St. Augustine to Francis Bacon. Now it is coming to be admitted that the labours of the Schoolmen within that period do count for something in the history of human thought. This Primer is an outline sketch of those labours, by one who believes in their value.

J. R.

Pope's Hall, Oxford,
Midsummer 1908.

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SCHOLASTICISM

CHAPTER I

ORIGIN OF SCHOLASTICISM

'He is in the schools,' at Oxford, means that a man is undergoing written examinations in a building known as the 'Examination Schools,' conspicuous at the east end of High Street. Oral disputation, more or less in syllogistic form, used to be part of the examination—in the Middle Ages it was the whole. The men at Oxford, Paris, Cologne, and other mediæval universities, who took part in those examinations, first as examinees, afterwards in their turn as Masters and Doctors, were known as 'Schoolmen,' or 'Scholastics,' and the philosophy which was the staple of their examinations was the 'scholastic philosophy,'[1] or 'Scholasticism,' as we shall call it. Scholasticism is not quite dead at the present

[1] There is also 'scholastic theology,' an orderly presentation of revealed doctrine: with that we are not concerned here.

day: it is still the philosophy most countenanced by authority in the schools of the Catholic Church. Nor is it possible to assign a precise date for its origin. Like the mediæval universities which harboured it, it grew gradually from obscure beginnings. It will be convenient, however, to fix its rise in the eleventh century, and to call St. Anselm (1033-1109) the first scholastic, as he has also been called the last of the Fathers. The thirteenth century was the golden age of Scholasticism. For two centuries following it gradually declined: the Renaissance found it decadent; the latter half of the sixteenth century saw a splendid revival in Spain, but that was short-lived. Baconian physical science set in, and the Cartesian philosophy, and all the while Scholasticism was dying: at the end of the eighteenth century, the era of Kant and the French Revolution, Scholasticism was dead. It has had something of a resurrection since.

Now to the question with which Scholasticism started. Porphyry, the Neo-Platonist, in his *Isagoge* wrote: 'Now concerning genera and species, whether they be substances or mere concepts of the mind; and if substances, whether they be corporeal or incorporeal, and whether they exist apart from sensible things or in and

about sensible things, all this I will decline to say.' This sentence set the intellectual world of the eleventh century ablaze. It was the celebrated question of Universals. Universal Ideas, or General Concepts, characterise a class of things. Sometimes this class is a species (man, fish), sometimes a genus (animal). There was ocular evidence of the existence of this fish and that fish, this man John, and that man Paul. But what was *fish* simply, *man*, *animal*? A mere name, and no more? So the Nominalists were said to teach; but it may be doubted whether there ever were any Nominalists, at least in the Middle Ages.[1] If General Names are mere names, and have no meaning, then all human speech, carried on as it is by General Names, is gibberish. Even the chattering of apes is scarcely that. General Names must point to some object: what is that object? Porphyry suggests, though he does not affirm it, 'a mere concept of the mind.' That affirmation was actually made by many. They are known as Conceptualists. The philosophers, misnamed Nominalists, were really Conceptualists. There is this objection to Conceptualism, that if the

[1] So M. de Wulf of Louvain, in his *Histoire de Philosophie Médiévale*, a classic work.

object of the Universal is a mere concept of the mind, then human speech has a meaning, to be sure, it is not mere gibberish, but it does not attain to anything outside of the mind of the speaker. To say then that 'owls are night-birds' is not to affirm a fact of Natural History, but a fact of human thought. Ancient Conceptualism comes very near to modern Idealism.

The Realists held that there was something objective, something outside our minds, answering to these Universal Ideas. They who took this view differed among themselves, some holding the object of a Universal Idea to be itself universal and one, others holding it to be particular and multiplied with the multiplication of individuals. The former are called Ultra-Realists: they might also be called Platonic Realists. The latter are called Moderate Realists: we might call them Aristotelian Realists. To take an example: to the Ultra-Realist there is one ideal, universal, undying Humanity, found entire in Peter, the same entire in Paul, the same in James, the same in every man. To the Moderate Realist, Humanity is indeed something outside of the perceiving mind, but it exists only in individual living men, and is differentiated in each, one humanity in Peter, another humanity in Paul,

and so forth. To the Moderate Realist, everything that exists is individual. To the Ultra-Realist, the truest and highest realities are ideal and universal. Moderate Realism is undoubtedly true, but the difficulty grows upon you as you think of it, as every one well knows who has felt the fascination of Plato. The early Realists inclined to Ultra-Realism. So did St. Anselm; so did a very different man, the pantheist John Scotus Erigena (800-877).[1] A doughty Realist was William of Champeaux, bishop of Châlons (1070-1120), who, however, in the end was entirely driven out of his position by his disciple Abélard. Realism was opposed by Roscelin, a monk of Compiègne, who was teaching in 1087; also by Abélard. Peter Abélard (1079-1142), philosopher and theologian, the most brilliant thinker of his age, ran through a romantic and chequered career, the reverses of which he has recounted in his *Historia Calamitatum.* As a theologian, he encountered the vehement opposition of St. Bernard. We are only concerned with him as a philosopher. He clearly marked off philosophy as a distinct study

[1] More correctly, Eriugena. Not to be confounded with Duns Scotus. Being a pantheist, Eriugena was no scholastic, much less the founder of Scholasticism.

from theology. He endeavoured to base on grounds of reason certain mysteries of faith which were commonly thought to be established by revelation alone. In this, his tendency was the very opposite of that followed later by Duns Scotus. Abélard's theory of Universals, carefully considered, is not far removed from Moderate Realism. Altogether, Abélard and his disciple, Gilbert de la Porrée, bishop of Poitiers (1076-1154), as philosophers, in which capacity alone they enter into our purview, effected much for the advance of Scholasticism. They had in their hands at least some portion of the Organon, or logical works, of Aristotle. By the end of the twelfth century the whole of the Organon was in the hands of Western scholars, in a Latin translation. Almost without exception, the Schoolmen were very slightly acquainted with Greek. The texts of the Greek philosophers slumbered in the libraries of Constantinople: the men of the West, whose spirit of ardent inquiry would have turned them to good account, had them not, and could not have read them. East and West, in those days, though both Christian, were poles asunder in everything but their common faith. All the disputations in the Schools went on in Latin. All the works of the Schoolmen are written in

Latin. Latin was the universal language, that gave to European students of those days the privileges of cosmopolitans. Scholastic Latin is a very curious language. It is not simply bad Latin: it is no jargon: it has its rules and its terminology, all very exactly observed. The Schoolmen indeed were masters of language; and in this respect compare very favourably with most modern philosophers. One peculiarity of scholastic Latin is the grafting of Greek idioms upon the Latin stock. This arose from the Latin translations of Aristotle; works very literally executed, and, to say the truth, very obscurely, and even inaccurately. Considering the badness of their translations, it is a standing wonder how near the Schoolmen came to the mind of their great Master.

By the end of the twelfth century, Moderate Realism was triumphant in the Schools. Throughout the great age of Scholasticism, the thirteenth century, the age of St. Thomas, its supremacy was unchallenged, and the scholastic intellect busied itself with other questions. Consequently it is a wrong definition to lay down that scholastic philosophy is the study of the nature of genera and species.

Robert Pulleyn may be mentioned as the

earliest known scholastic lecturer in the nascent University of Oxford, early in the twelfth century. Another Englishman, John of Salisbury (1120-1180), friend of St. Thomas à Becket, and ultimately bishop of Chartres, more of a literary man than Schoolmen generally were, was at once a philosopher himself and the historian of the philosophy of his age. His best known works are the *Polycraticus* and the *Metalogicus.* While upholding Moderate Realism, he warned his readers not to consume all their philosophic leisure upon Universals. He argued the sterility of logic when separated from the more concrete sciences, a very necessary theory to point out in his age, when some were taking formal logic, others grammar, for the acme of all science. John was a politician too, and commented on Plutarch. His contemporary Alan de Lille (1128-1202), surnamed 'the universal Doctor,' held similar views. Alan and John together represent the furthest advance of scholasticism in the twelfth century.

CHAPTER II

SCHOLASTICISM IN THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

§ 1. *The Library of the thirteenth-century Schoolman.*

In judging of the Schoolmen we must remember how destitute they were of those instruments of study and research without which any modern student would consider the progress of his work impossible. Not that the privation was altogether a dead loss. Devoid of helps from without, men thought harder. For physics they depended upon their unaided senses. No telescope, no microscope, no battery, no chemical re-agents; no museums nor collections either. For the literary student there were books, manuscript of course. He had in his hands, and by frequent quotation showed his diligent use of, most of the Latin Classics, Cicero, Virgil, Horace, Terence, Juvenal, Seneca, Quintilian. Pliny's *Natural History* he knew at least by extracts. Knowing no Greek, as we have said, he had in his book-

chest no Greek manuscripts. Supreme importance is therefore attached to the translations of Aristotle: indeed it is not too much to say that had Aristotle never been put into Latin, scholastic philosophy never would have arisen. Abélard in 1136 had in his hands translations of what was quaintly entitled the *Perihermenias* (Aristotle on Interpretation) and the *Categories*. The second half of that same century possessed the whole of the *Organon*, but no more. Had you asked a clerk of our own King John's Court who Aristotle was, he would have answered with a shrug of the shoulders, 'Oh, a crabbed logician.' The throne of the Stagirite was not yet firmly planted in the West. By the middle of the thirteenth century, however, besides versions from the Arabic, a translation from the Greek of nearly the whole of Aristotle was achieved by two Dominicans, Henry of Brabant and William of Moerbeke.[1] All that the Schoolmen had of Plato was a fragment of the *Timaeus*, translated by Chalcidius, also the *Phaedo* and *Meno*: further information about the philosopher was gathered

[1] The *History of Animals* does not seem to have been translated, nor the later books of the *Generation of Animals*, nor the end of the *Metaphysics*. To Aristotle the later Middle Age attributed a work, really by Proclus, known as *Liber de Causis*, extraordinarily popular.

from St. Augustine and sundry Neo-Platonists. Chief of these latter was the Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (probably a monk of the sixth century), whose treatises *Of the Divine Names* and *Of the Heavenly Hierarchy* had a great hold on the mediæval mind. A still greater treasure was the works of Boethius, who was long the chief authority on Aristotle. Many fragments of the ancient learning were found embedded in the works of the Latin Fathers, notably St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, St. Gregory the Great, St. Isidore, Lactantius, and Latin versions of Clement of Alexandria and Origen. There was also a sort of Cyclopædia, the work of Martianus Capella, bearing the strange title of *The Nuptials of Mercury and Philologia.* Last but not least, diligently conned over and continually transcribed, there was the Bible according to the Latin Vulgate.

§ 2. *The topics of scholastic disputation.*

Scholasticism was a thing made at Universities, made at Oxford and elsewhere, but above all in the great University of Paris, the Athens of the Middle Ages. Throughout the forty days of Lent the candidate for the Bachelor's degree 'determined'; that is, put forward propositions and defended them against opponents. Then

two or three years' study, and more 'determining,' converted him into a Licentiate. Further delay and further disputation saw him at last a Master or Doctor of the Sorbonne, the highest intellectual distinction which the world had to bestow.[1] The 'determinations' which carried the persevering student finally up to the Master's Chair presented lists of propositions of which these may serve as specimens:—'There are [*or* there are not] in primordial matter (*materia prima*) special aptitudes of being (*rationes seminales*).' 'The rational soul is [*or* is not] the only form in man.' 'There is not [*or* there is] a real distinction between the soul and its faculties.' Reading over the propositions, one sees at a glance that the Schoolmen were not all of one mind in philosophy: in fact they disputed with one another fiercely and in grim earnest. At the same time it is difficult for our minds to see the points at issue.

> But what they fought each other for,
> I never could make out.

[1] The College of the Sorbonne, the first founded in the University of Paris, dated from 1253, St. Thomas's time. It presupposed the degree in Arts, and presented for degrees in Theology only. There is an interesting and amusing account of the Sorbonne at the end of the eighteenth century by a Licentiate of the same, an *émigré* Priest, *Mémoires de l'Abbé Baston.*

The gauge on which the mediæval mind ran was not our modern gauge. Which of the two is broad, and which is narrow, we need not argue: anyhow the gauge is different, and the passage of the train of thought from the one to the other is a troublesome operation. Whatever difficulty we experience in making out the Schoolman's objective, we shall be wise in presuming that he had some real question before him, and that the disputations in mediæval Paris and Oxford were not as Molière has represented them, mere wars of words.

All scholastic philosophy is based upon the distinction between *matter* and *form*. Modern thought makes light of the distinction. But we must absolutely attend to it, if we are to have any notion of Scholasticism at all. Likewise we must bear in mind the distinction of *substance* and *accident*. According to the Schoolmen, substance alone fully is: accident has but a diminished being, inhering in substance. The idealism of our day abolishes substance, or permanent being, altogether, and recognises accident, not as anything permanently 'inhering' (for there is nothing left to inhere in), but as a fleeting 'state of consciousness.' Substance to the Schoolmen being something *determinate*, definitely *this* and

not *that* (what they with Aristotle called *hoc aliquid*), they distinguished in it two constituents, the *determinable*, which they called *matter*, and the *determinant*, which they called *form*. According to the distinction of substance and accident, they distinguished forms *substantial* and *accidental*. All accidents are forms, but not all forms are accidents. There is *substantial form*, that determinant which makes the thing to be what it is, and in the absence of which it would cease to be; whereas an *accidental form* may be removed without the thing perishing. Lustre, for example, is an accidental form of gold, for gold still remains gold, even though it has grown dim. What was the substantial form of gold a Schoolman would not venture to say: he had not yet analysed material substance into its essential components in detail, nor have we either. The alchemists laboured at finding out the substantial form of gold.

Most interesting of all created substances were the substances of man and angel. Of angels, the Schoolmen, prompted by Holy Scripture and Neo-Platonism, said many curious things. The later Schoolmen took them for pure forms: others attributed to them some sort of *matter*, not, however, body. But the most perfect type of

form, in the scholastic sense, was the human soul. The soul *informs* the body, which is its *matter*:[1] the soul is not merely the *prime mover* of the body, as is the boatman of the boat—that was the Platonic conception of human nature—but the Schoolmen hold with Aristotle that the soul is the *prime constituent* of the body; soul and body make one entity, one nature, one principle of action. 'Body and soul are not two actually existing substances, but out of the two of them is made one substance actually existing: for a man's body is not the same in actuality when the soul is present as when it is absent: it is the soul that gives actual being' (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles,* ii. 69).

A substance may have any number of *accidental forms* corresponding to its various accidental qualities. Here the substance itself stands for the *matter.* Here, too, the *matter* is of a higher and nobler order of being than the *form*; that is, than the *accidental form.* But the *substantial form* is nobler than the *matter* to which it gives being. Hereupon we come to a prime debate among the thirteenth-century Schoolmen: *Can a substance have more than one substantial form?* And

[1] 'And o'er-informed the tenement of clay,' says Dryden of Achitophel's soul, too great for its puny body.

notably, *besides the soul, are there other substantial forms in the human body?* The affirmative to this question was called the doctrine of the *plurality of forms.* The negative was held by St. Thomas in the teeth of much opposition. His adversaries actually procured the condemnation of his doctrine of the *unity of form* by the ecclesiastical authorities both at Paris and at Oxford. In the end St. Thomas triumphed. His opponents pleaded for further forms of what they called 'corporeity'; and asked how it was, if the soul alone gave being to the body, that the body did not fall into nothingness at death. Another phase of the difficulty is revealed in the light of modern biology. The lowest types of animal life present to our inspection a few neurones, or nerve-cells, with nerves and muscular fibres corresponding. When we examine the human body, we find similar neurones and fibres repeated, only in vastly greater number and complexity. Has each of these neurones a life of its own, that is to say, a *form* of its own, for the form is the life? Is the soul then a sort of President of a Republic of forms, or is that dominant life and form, which we call the soul, the one life and substantial form of the human body? Professor M'Dougall lays it down: 'Each nerve-cell, or *neurone* as it is now

commonly called, is, so far as the maintenance of the vital processes of nutrition and growth are concerned, a self-contained individual, not an independent individual but a member of a very complex society, the cells of the whole body' (*Physiological Psychology*, Temple Primer, p. 24). What would St. Thomas have said to that? I do not judge the question: I merely state it to show that Scholasticism was not that farrago of puerilities which a hasty observer might take it for, but that, in their own way and with the means of research at their command, the Schoolmen busied themselves with many problems that still fasten the interest of philosophers.

One most remarkable theme of scholastic ingenuity was primordial matter (*materia prima*). Many jokes have been levelled against it, but primordial matter is no laughing matter to any one who understands it. To begin with, primordial matter is not sheer and mere nothing. Were it so, the whole material universe would lapse into nothingness: for of primordial matter the said universe is composed. Primordial matter is simply matter devoid of any substantial form. In that state of isolation matter is never found. St. Thomas holds that it absolutely could not exist in such isolation. Matter can by no power

be isolated from all form. On the other hand, form cannot exist without matter, except possibly in the angel—certainly not in the material universe.[1] The earlier Scholasticism, however—sometimes called Augustinianism—did not take primordial matter to be altogether formless, but ascribed to it certain radical predispositions (called *rationes seminales*) to turn into *this* substance in preference to *that*. The notion of primordial matter came from Aristotle, who seems to have had it suggested to his mind by the *Timaeus* of Plato. What suggests primordial matter in the *Timaeus* is the primitive chaos, which was from eternity, ere Mind supervened to reduce it to an orderly world. In the systems of later philosophers primitive chaos was denuded more and more of attributes till it passed into the formless, wholly indeterminate and potential *materia prima* of St. Thomas.

'Faculty psychology' is derided in these days. The Schoolmen made much of it, and debated among themselves whether any real, or objectively valid, distinction can be drawn between the soul and its faculties. Such distinction was held by the later Scholastics: earlier writers of the School

[1] Can you have force without inertia? And what exactly is inertia?

denied it. The morbid multiplication of personalities in the 'Beauchamp case,' and similar cases, so interesting to our pathologists, tells rather in favour of the later view, which St. Thomas strongly maintained, that the faculties are really distinct from one another and from the soul. The later mediæval mystics made much of the *substance* of the soul (*fundus animae* they called it) as distinct from the *faculties*: in that substance, as in His inner sanctuary, they maintained that God dwelt by His grace. Professor James, in his peculiar psychology, claims a similar dignity for what he terms 'the subliminal self.'

'The principle of individuation,' *i.e.* that whereby a thing is its own singular self, and not the universal specific nature of the species to which it belongs—that whereby Jones is Jones, and not man in general—must seem to an unscholastic mind a quaint conceit. Like most difficulties in philosophy, it grows by thinking, and is no difficulty at all to the irreflective mind. A first solution might be this: as the universal cannot exist in its universality, but every existence must be singular, the existence of the thing itself is the principle of its individuation. But, replies the Thomist Schoolman, a thing can only be individualised by having an individual essence;

now the existence even of an existing thing is really distinct from its existing essence; you must seek the principle of individuation somewhere in the essence; existence, being no part of the essence of the thing, cannot be its principle of individuation. The essence of a thing consists of its matter and form. Form cannot be the principle of individuation, for form is a principle of perfection. If a perfection is to be limited, so as to be multiplied and repeated in many instances, the principle of limit must be sought elsewhere than in the perfection itself. The multiplication only can take place through the reception of the form into portions of matter. Matter then must be the principle of individuation. Not, however, matter in a state of absolute indetermination, not primordial matter simply, but 'matter marked by quantity'; for, apart from relation to quantity, there can be no such thing as 'portions of matter,' and hence no individuation by reception into distinct portions.[1] 'Matter,' says St. Thomas, 'considered in itself is indistinguishable; only inasmuch as it is distinguishable can it come to individualise the form received into it. For form

[1] Primordial matter is said to be *nec quanta nec qualis nec quid*: it has neither quantity nor quality, still less is it substance. So Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, VI. iii. § 5 (Bekker).

is not individualised by being received in matter, except in so far as it is received *in this matter or that matter, distinct and determinate here and now.* Now matter is not divisible except by quantity' (*Opusc. in Boeth.*, q. 4, a. 8). The conclusion is that laid down above, that form is individualised by 'matter marked by quantity,' *materia quantitate signata.*

This conclusion of St. Thomas was by no means received in the School with unanimity. St. Bonaventure looks to both matter and form together for the principle of individuation. Others placed the principle in a negation, inherent in each substance, marking it off from every other. To Duns Scotus the principle was positive, an aptitude of the final form to assume such and such individuality. The discussion lies far off the track of modern thought. To appreciate it, one needs long familiarity with the scholastic concepts of Matter and Quantity. Remembering that the principle, whatever it be, marks off, not species from species (which is done by the logical *differentia*), but individual from individual within the same species, whose specific essence is logically common, we may note that the soul of one man is individualised from the soul of another, according to St. Thomas, by the habitude which it bears to

this *particular body,* this particular *matter* which it is apt to *inform,* and not that,[1] a doctrine which falls in happily with the 'heredity' of modern science, whereby man is marked off from man even from his mother's womb.

The principle of individuation belongs to metaphysics. Its psychological obverse is the question of the cognition by intellect of things singular and individual. As whatever Midas touched turned to gold, so whatever intellect touches, it universalises, and, bursting beyond the individual, attains to the type. How ever then can intellect be cognisant of the individual? The Schoolmen found an easy and no doubt a correct answer. Sensory perception is not of the universal, in the first place, but of the individual. Man knows individual things through his senses. 'The human soul takes cognisance of the universal and of the singular by two principles, sense [of the singular] and intellect [of the universal]' (*Contra Gentiles,* ii. 100). The Schoolmen laboured much, and differed among themselves, how the pure intellect of the angel can be cognisant of individually existing objects. Likewise they had a hard fight with the Arabian commentators of Aristotle, who would have confined the knowledge of God to the uni-

[1] Cf. *Of God and His Creatures,* p. 156.

versal and ideal order. These difficulties about God and the angels we must leave. Enough has been said to give the reader some idea of the preoccupations of the scholastic mind.

§ 3. *The great Schoolmen of the Thirteenth Century.*

Peter the Lombard, surnamed the Master of the Sentences, died bishop of Paris in 1160. His work, called *Sentences,* not very profound and not very original, had the good fortune to become the favourite text-book in the schools, and kept its place for centuries. It is divided into four books, on God, on Creatures, on Virtues and Beatitude, on Sacraments. The four books of St. Thomas *Contra Gentiles* pretty closely correspond.

Alexander of Hales, so called from the place of his birth, Hales in Gloucestershire, a locality no longer identifiable,[1] a Franciscan, was a Master in the University of Paris, and died in 1245, leaving behind him a *Sum of Theology,* still extant. Alexander perfected the scholastic method of treatment, which is, first to propose a question, then state various arguments pointing to a solution opposite to your own, then to give your own solution, and finally to refute the

[1] Could it be Uley, some dozen miles south of Gloucester?

arguments to the contrary. Alexander stands to St. Bonaventure as Albertus Magnus to St. Thomas. In either case the disciple has outshone the master.

John of Fidansa, known as St. Bonaventure (1221-1274), 'the Seraphic Doctor,' a Franciscan, studied and taught in the University of Paris from 1242 to 1257, being admitted a Master in the last year of his residence. That same year he became General of his Order, and in 1273 was created Cardinal Bishop of Ostia, dying at the Council of Lyons in the year following. His extant works fill nine volumes. He was a personal friend of St. Thomas Aquinas, from whom he differs by making more of the will than of the understanding; by being conservative rather than an innovator in philosophy; by not allowing the angels to be pure forms; by allowing a plurality of substantial forms, one, however, dominant over the rest, in the same being; by ascribing to primordial matter some radical predispositions of its own; by denying the reality of the distinction between essence and existence in existing creatures; by making the principle of individuation to be matter and form together; by not allowing the philosophic possibility of creation from all eternity.

Albertus Magnus (1193-1280), a German, 'the

Universal Doctor,' the best travelled, the most erudite, the most vigorous and long-lived of all the Schoolmen, was first a soldier, then became a Dominican, when he was over thirty years old: he studied and taught at Cologne, Hildesheim, Freiburg, Ratisbon, Strassburg, and finally at Paris: he organised the studies of his Order, was consecrated bishop of Ratisbon, then resigned his bishopric and returned to his studies, which he prosecuted with ardour at Cologne even to extreme old age. He was a voluminous writer. Perhaps his greatest achievement in philosophy was a paraphrase of Aristotle, with notes, some his own, some borrowed from others. 'Our intention,' he says, 'is to make all the parts of Aristotle, physics, metaphysics, and mathematics, intelligible to the Latins.' Albertus Magnus and Roger Bacon were the two chief Schoolmen who applied themselves to physical science and advocated experimental methods. In the width of his studies, Albertus of all the Schoolmen best represents Aristotle. But he had not Aristotle's accuracy, precision, and self-consistency, as those qualities shone forth in his great pupil Aquinas.

St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), 'the Angelic Doctor,' chief of the Schoolmen, born in Southern Italy, entered the Dominican Order in 1243, came

to the University of Paris in 1245, and there for three years heard the lectures of Albertus Magnus, taking his Bachelor's Degree in 1248, in which year he followed Albertus to Cologne. He returned to Paris in 1253, took his Master's Degree (along with St. Bonaventure) in 1257, and thereupon lectured for two or three years, lectures the substance of which probably we have in his *Summa contra Gentiles.* He left for Italy in 1260, returned a third time to Paris in 1269, finally returning to Italy in 1271, and dying on his way to the Council of Lyons in 1274. His great work is the *Summa Theologiae,* but his *Opera Omnia* fill many volumes. There will be more to say of St. Thomas when we come to his great opponent Averroes.

John Duns Scotus (1266-1308), a native of the British Isles, the 'Subtle Doctor,' was to the Franciscans what Thomas Aquinas had been to the Dominicans. For centuries afterwards Schoolmen were divided into Thomists and Scotists. Scotus was the glory of Oxford as St. Thomas of Paris. We find him lecturing in Oxford for ten years, 1294-1304; thence he went to Paris; thence in four years to Cologne, where he was welcomed like a prince, and died almost immediately upon his arrival. He commented on

the Logic, Metaphysics, and *De anima* of Aristotle. His commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard is called the *Opus Oxoniense.* His later work at the University of Paris, where he became Doctor of Theology, is the *Opus Parisiense.* In Scotus, great Schoolman as he was, Scholasticism overreached itself, and entered upon a subtlety which was the beginning of its decline. Scholastic philosophy works out like algebra; and as in algebra one easily forgets the data of sensible experience from which one started, and revels in formulae alone, so, too, Scholasticism tends to lose itself in formalism away from *a posteriori* facts. There is such a thing as a delicious oblivion of external realities, and a joy in the workings of one's own mind; yet a dangerous joy, as is the joy of the inebriate, who in his transport is robbed of his property. Truth, objective truth, is or ought to be the possession of the philosopher. Scholasticism is not the only philosophy that has suffered by excess of formalism: the philosophies that have grown upon the foundations laid by Kant have suffered yet more.

Scotus had a genius for mathematics: he delighted in distinctions and differences, and in criticism of the standard philosophers of his day, including 'Brother Thomas.' He bequeathed to

the discussion of posterity a distinction called 'formal and real' (*formalis a parte rei*), as that between animality and rationality in man, or between wisdom and goodness in God. He says: 'It is a distinction in every way antecedent to our thought: wisdom is in the thing from the nature of the thing; and goodness is in the thing from the nature of the thing; but wisdom in the thing is not formally (precisely) goodness in the thing.' All the Schoolmen, it may be remarked, took wonderful interest in the differences of things, and in the hierarchy of being. Scotus makes Will the chief faculty: St. Thomas is an Intellectualist. Scotus ascribes to the Will of God not only the existence of creatures, but even their very natures and essences. Other Schoolmen have held the same. The doctrine would change the whole face of philosophy. Some think that it would conduct to the sheerest Nominalism and be the ruin of all truth. Scotus places Beatitude in an act of the Will. St. Thomas, with Aristotle, places it in Vision, the act of the Understanding. Beyond the primordial matter of St. Thomas (*materia prima*, which he calls *secundo-prima*), Scotus discovers a primo-primordial (*primo-prima*) matter, which he asserts to be the fundamental element in the constitution of all creatures,

even the angels, whom he will not allow to be pure forms. This primo-primordial matter is never found in isolation, but God, if He willed, could isolate it. On the relation of reason to revelation, Scotus and St. Thomas are agreed that it is the office of reason to bow to revelation, to prove by argument some truths of religion, and to answer difficulties in the way of other truths, which it cannot directly prove, but must accept as revealed. Scotus, however, critical spirit that he was, was less confident than St. Thomas as to the range of religious truth that reason could directly establish. Thus he found the philosophical arguments for the immortality of the soul unconvincing, as also those for the resurrection of the body: for a 'sure and certain hope of resurrection' he considered that we must fall back upon faith. Nay, he was not clear as to the rational proof of the omnipotence of God. He writes in his thesis (called *Quodlibetum*) for his Doctorate at Paris (q. 7, n. 32): 'It is true then that sovereign active power, or infinite power, is omnipotence; but it is not known by natural reason that the highest power possible (*suprema potentia possibilis*), even though infinite in intensity, is omnipotence properly so called, that is to say, power immediately avail-

able to act upon any and every possibility.' This growing distrust of reason as an active support of faith is to be noted. It is the first autumn tint of decay. In its bloom Scholasticism was more confident of its powers.

Roger Bacon (1214-1294), an Englishman, 'the Wonderful Doctor,' studied at Oxford; in 1245 was teaching at Paris; entered the Franciscan Order, probably in the convent at Oxford, when he was over forty years of age; got into trouble with his Superiors, but was vindicated in 1266 by Clement IV., then newly seated in the papal chair. To that Pope he dedicated his *Opus majus*, his *Opus minus*, and his *Opus tertium*, the two latter works being a sort of second and third editions of the first, put in briefer form, with some new matter. When the Pope, his protector, died, Bacon was in trouble again. He was summoned from Oxford to Rome to answer for himself in 1278, and spent some time in prison. He is said to have been buried at Oxford, where 'Folly Bridge,' on which in the eighteenth century stood what was then called 'Welcome's Folly,' and had been Friar Bacon's Observatory, still dimly preserves his memory.[1]

[1] Readers of Johnson's *Vanity of Human Wishes* will recall the reference to 'Bacon's Mansion' at Oxford.

Bacon himself was a bridge, or point of connection, between Scholasticism and the Physical Science of our day. Aristotle had said (*De generatione animalium*, iii. 10): 'We must believe the evidence of our senses rather than arguments, and believe arguments if they agree with the phenomena'; and Bacon wrote: 'Without experience nothing is known.' St. Thomas would have said the same, and the Schoolmen generally, with their own qualifications and explanations. Bacon quite speaks the mind of his scholastic contemporaries in writing: 'There are two modes of knowing—by argument and by experience: argument concludes and makes us grant the conclusion, but does not produce certainty and remove doubt, and enable the mind to rest in sight of the truth, unless it find it by the way of experience.' But it may be admitted that as there are minds to-day who revel in pure mathematics and have small taste for physical research, so the Schoolmen as a body preferred abstract argument to *a posteriori* inquiry, although they acknowledged the utility of the latter. And this was a weakness of the School. The brilliant exception, as we have seen, was Albertus Magnus, along with Bacon. Bacon, then, did make experiments and take observations, as he was able: he

was astronomer, alchemist (the chemist of those days), optician, geographer, and geometer. He seems to have made a telescope: he argued the possibility of 'cars moving with incalculable speed without draught-cattle,' also of suspension-bridges and flying-machines. Tradition ascribes to him the invention of that dubious instrument of civilisation, gunpowder. He declared the Milky Way to be a collection of many stars. He had also a great zeal for history, a subject on which his age was sadly ignorant, and for the study of languages as an instrument of history. This predilection for history was connected with his philosophical views. It is dangerous and misleading to register philosophers of earlier centuries under names of schools that have appeared in our time. With this caution we may say that Bacon was something of an Ontologist and something of a Traditionalist. He was an Ontologist (as was Rosmini) in this, that what scholastics call 'the active intellect,' the maker of universal ideas in the mind, he took to be no part of the human mind, but God Himself. In this, Bacon went some way at least with the Persian Avicenna (*Contra Gentiles*, ii. 74, 76: *Of God and His Creatures*, pp. 142 *sq.*). However wrong Bacon and Avicenna be in this opinion, they are

not for that Pantheists.[1] As a Traditionalist (approximating to but not coinciding with De Bonald and De Lamennais), not as a votary of physical science, Bacon wrote : 'Philosophy, taken by itself, is no use.' It had to be eked out, he considered, by revelation. That revelation was given in the beginning, and must be sought in the writings of the ancient sages. Hence his insistence on language and history, as things indispensable for our placing ourselves in the current of tradition. 'It was impossible,' so writes this great investigator of nature, 'it was impossible for man to arrive of himself at the great truths of sciences and arts, but he must have had revelation. . . . The fulness of philosophy was given to the same persons to whom was also given the law of God, that is, to the holy patriarchs and prophets from the beginning of the world.' St. Thomas would hardly have gone so far.

Bacon was at Oxford while St. Thomas was at Paris. Oxford, however, was unfriendly in his life-time to the great Paris Doctor, and even condemned him after his death. As a scholastic, Bacon is pre-Thomist and Augustinian. He

[1] About Avicenna, it is not clear whether he made the Active Intellect God or a created being.

believes in *rationes seminales*, or predispositions in primordial matter, as also in that plurality of substantial forms which St. Thomas abhorred.

Like Scotus, Roger Bacon was critical of his contemporaries, nay even abusive, a defect of judgment which embroiled him with the heads of his Order. Still there is no evidence to show that Roger Bacon was aught else than a devout Friar Minor and a staunch Catholic.

§ 4. *The Antagonists of Scholasticism, the Arabians.*

Fas est ab hoste doceri, 'it is right to make your enemy your teacher.' The Arabians taught the Schoolmen; and the Schoolmen first learnt from, then battled with, the Arabians, using the weapons which their masters had placed in their hands. Not that there was any personal intercourse between Mohammedan and Scholastic. The teaching was received through books; it was done by translations. At Toledo, in the twelfth century, there was a regular school of translators from Arabic into Latin, or often from a Hebrew translation of the Arabic. The wares sold well, Toledo translations as well as Toledo steel; and the labour of translating went on briskly in the

century succeeding. The translations referred to were of Aristotle, and of commentators on Aristotle, sometimes Jewish, sometimes Greek. The Arabs got their Aristotle originally from the Syrian Greeks. More than any other Greek writer, Aristotle captivated the Arabian mind In his person once more did captive Greece take captive her rude conqueror, as Mohammedanism gradually engulfed the provinces of the Byzantine Empire. The Castor and Pollux of the Arabian philosophy, in the appreciation of their Western compeers, were Avicenna and Averroes. Both were strong Aristotelians. The latter, for his success in commentating on Aristotle, is usually referred to in scholastic writings as 'The Commentator.' Aristotle in his Arabian dress so alarmed the orthodoxy of the Catholic Church as to be proscribed in the University of Paris. It was the glorious function of St. Thomas to remove the stigma from the Stagirite, to set aside the Arabian interpretations, and to put Christian constructions upon the sayings of him to whom he ever lovingly refers as 'The Philosopher.' Truth and orthodoxy are one thing, Aristotelianism is another. Whether Albertus Magnus and St. Thomas, or Avicenna and Averroes, more faithfully represented the real mind of Aristotle, is a

large question not to be gone into here. Probably Aristotle was neither quite so orthodox on the one hand, nor quite so erratic on the other. The Arabians, it must be confessed, wove into his text pieces of Neo-Platonist and Oriental mysticism and astrology, to which his sober mind was a stranger.

Avicenna (Abu Ali Ibn Sina[1]), a native of Persia, 980-1037, interests us on two accounts: for his view of the 'active intellect' and for his view of Providence. The former topic has been brought out already, in speaking of Bacon. On Providence Avicenna held, and interpreted Aristotle, *Metaphysics* xii., to teach, that God knows nothing but Himself and the ideal order of things possible, that He is ignorant of all other actualities and individual existences besides His own, and particularly that things evil, trivial, and mean, are wholly beyond His ken and His care. This doctrine is confuted by St. Thomas, *Contra Gentiles*, i. 63-71, 50-54. Ultimately, however, Avicenna did admit in God a knowledge of particular things, not got by virtue of His own nature, but by knowledge communicated to Him

[1] The Arab names suffered grotesque corruption in the West, hardly more grotesque, however, than the corruption of many an English name in our old parish registers.

from the angels, spirits emanating from God, who presided over the heavenly spheres, and thence observing earthly things, made report thereof to the Most High.

Averroes (Abu Walid Mohammed Ibn Roschd), 1120-1198, born at Cordova, died in Morocco, had many followers in the University of Paris, with whom St. Thomas was in continual warfare, chief of them being Siger of Brabant. Averroism was rife in Europe for four centuries; and he who shall study it well, will scarcely think it extinct at this day. It fascinates without satisfying. The great Commentator was wrong, egregiously wrong, in his conclusions; yet he had before him a truth which he never reached, which none has reached since, though many have endeavoured; a discovery the making of which would renovate philosophy. I refer to the conjunction of the human mind with the divine, called by the Arabs *ittisâl.* Averroes, then, held that every human mind was in contact with an Intelligence greater than itself. This commanding Intelligence not only formed universal concepts for all mankind, and so was identified with the Aristotelian 'active intellect' (here Avicenna went with Averroes), but also stored and kept the concepts when made, being also one with the Aristotelian 'potential

intellect' (here Averroes stood alone).[1] Thus man could neither form intellectual concepts for himself, nor keep them in himself when formed. His act of understanding, in fact, was done for him, and put into him from without. Man by himself was but the highest of sentient natures; a sentient nature, however, in contact with intelligence. The manner of this contact (*ittisâl; in Latin continuatio*) was thus: By his senses man gets impressions which are stored in him as sensory images, or phantasms; with the phantasm in the human mind the corresponding idea in the external[2] Intelligence conjoins itself. Having thus a phantasm of his own, conjoined with an idea belonging to another, man thereby has an intelligent view of what the phantasm represents, and thus man understands.

But, urges St. Thomas (*Contra Gentiles,* ii. 59), 'the fact that an intelligible impression united with a foreign understanding comes somehow to be in man, will not render man intelligent; it will merely make him understood by that separately subsisting intelligence.' Any one interested in the conflict of Aquinas with Averroes

[1] See *Of God and His Creatures,* pp. 122-124.

[2] Averroes fails to explain how that 'corresponding idea' got there.

should study the long chapters *Contra Gentiles*, ii. 73, 75; *Of God and His Creatures*, pp. 135-141, 144-148.

This doctrine, called the doctrine of the 'Unity of the intellect,' and consequently of the will, in all mankind, created immense excitement in the Western Schools, and called down the condemnation of the Church. It removed individual responsibility, individual rational souls, and consequently individual immortality. No Averroist was ever able to state what their one Active and Potential Intelligence, which did the office of understanding for all mankind, in itself was. Averroes declined to say that it was God, so escaping the charge of pantheism. Somehow it seemed to be dependent for its being on the continuance of the human race, which Averroes declared to have existed from all eternity and to go on for ever. It was the eternal common stock of many individual minds. It was a sort of Impersonal Tradition. But it was nothing definitely.

Apart from this strange doctrine, which he opposed with all his might, St. Thomas took many things from Averroes, as did Albertus Magnus from Avicenna.

CHAPTER III

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF SCHOLASTICISM

DIFFERING much among themselves, and fighting one another vigorously, the Schoolmen still make one school of philosophy, and present a united front against adversaries, contemporary and subsequent. They are all *orthodox*, in the Roman Catholic sense; they are all *dualist* (not pantheist, idealist, or monist); they are all *optimist* (taking a cheerful view of the world and of the competency of human reason); they are all *static*, or *feudal*, believing in a fixed hierarchy of beings.

1. *Orthodoxy.*—The Schoolmen were Churchmen, faithful to the Church they served. Their every page testifies to their zeal for orthodoxy. If some were less orthodox than others, they were also less scholastic. They speculated with considerable freedom, but always laboured to make out their speculations to be in harmony with the

teachings of Mother Church, and really at heart desired that they should be so. It would not be fair to accuse any of them of heresy, even though it might appear that this or that utterance, pursued through all its consequences, should end in contradicting one or other of the dogmas of faith. The author had no mind to follow his statement so far, and would not have owned that it led so far. 'To no author should there be imputed an opinion false, or highly absurd, unless it be gathered expressly from his utterances, or follow evidently from his utterances.' These are the words of Scotus.

Still it would not be right to regard Scholastic Philosophy as a series of mere corollaries drawn from articles of faith, mere dictates of dogmatic theology. The subtlety and variety of Scholastic disputation suffices to set aside such a view. Schoolman differed from Schoolman; but men agreed in one common faith do not differ on conclusions following palpably and plainly therefrom, unless they be lamentably wanting in logic, which the Schoolmen were not. Only as trains get further from the starting-point do they lose sight of one another's courses, and the difference of the directions which they severally took from the first widens between them. Philosophy may

be applied to a dogma of faith; so was Scholasticism applied continually. As the application was pressed and followed on, the Schoolmen travelled wide of one another, nor did the Church intervene to bring them together, so long as the dogma from whence they started was not plainly denied. But philosophy, as such, is not founded upon dogma and revelation. It has its own principles, which are truths of intuitive reason; and it proceeds upon facts of experience. It is a different science from scholastic theology, nor is its whole domain contained within or circumscribed by theology. It does not stand to theology as the county of Rutland to the rest of England, contained within it and circumscribed by it. Nor are the frontiers of philosophy conterminous with theology throughout their whole extent. The frontiers of England are not wholly conterminous with those of Wales. All England does not consist of the Welsh Marches. There is much philosophy, many philosophical questions, having nothing to do with theology. To take an example from Scholasticism: its central tenet of the composition of all things out of matter and form has nothing to do with theology. The theory of matter and form is due to Aristotle—clearly no Catholic. Many Catholic philosophers have

rejected and do reject matter and form. It is an open issue in philosophy, independent of faith; and there are many such.

2. *Dualism.*—All philosophers draw some distinction between the mind and the world which it cognises; also, if they be theists, between God and the world. But many, perhaps most modern philosophers, will not allow this distinction to be a clear and deep line of cleavage. They dream of God and the world, they dream of the subject perceiving and the object perceived, meeting in what they call 'a higher unity.' That is to say, modern philosophy is idealistic, monistic, pantheistic. Such, eminently, Scholasticism was not. The ninth century pantheist, John Scotus Eriugena, was no ancestor of the Scholastics. To every genuine Schoolman, God was 'high above all nations,' so high that the world in comparison with God cannot be said to *be* at all. In the sense in which God *is*, the world *is not.* The world has being, indeed, 'analogous' to the being of God, but infinitely inferior. The world then is no emanation from God, no necessary 'shadow' cast by Godhead and projected outside Itself: the world, so every Schoolman teaches, owes its origin to a free volition of God, put forth at the beginning of time, at a distance from

the present, remote, but not infinite;[1] in other words, the world was *created* out of nothing, and owes its continued existence to the mere good pleasure of its Creator. As God is above the world, so the world is beyond and independent of the knowing mind of man. The most pronounced feature of all Scholastic treatises is their pronounced objectivity. The Scholastic mind was bent on *being*, not on *forms of thought* or constraining *needs* of believing. The difficulties raised by Berkeley, Hume, and Kant, were not difficulties to Albert or Thomas. He triumphed over them by refusing to entertain them. His metaphysics went with his psychology, the common psychology of human nature. Man invincibly believes that he sees a world which is no part of himself. That invincible belief was to the Schoolman an axiomatic truth. He never laboured to prove it: to him it was unprovable, because it was a primary datum of his nature, and there was no going beyond it. 'In the process of understanding, the intellectual

[1] St. Thomas held steadily that creation from eternity, and consequently the existence of the world from all eternity, was philosophically possible. In this he held with Averroes: most Schoolmen were against him. Unlike Averroes, however, he accepted the creation of the world at a finite distance of time from the present for a revealed truth.

impression received in the potential intellect is that *whereby* (*quo*) we understand, as the impression of colour in the eye is not that *which* (*quod*) is seen, but that *whereby* (*quo*) we see. On the other hand, that *which* (*quod*) is understood is the nature of things existing outside the soul, as also it is things existing outside the soul that are seen with the bodily sight: for to this end were arts and sciences invented, that things might be known in their natures' (*Contra Gentiles*, ii. 75). The distinction here drawn between *quod* and *quo* founds the standing reply of Scholasticism to Idealism. My consciousness is not the object but the instrument of my cognition.

3. *Optimism.*—The Schoolman is a cheerful man: he has a serene confidence in two things; (1) the competence of the human mind to attain to truth with certitude; (2) the general goodness of Being, and of the tendencies of things. On the latter point, of course, he was buoyed up by his faith, that 'to them that love God, all things work together unto good.' He never asked himself whether life were worth living. With him it was an axiom that Being is good, *omne ens est bonum*; and Living Being still better, for there was more of Being in it. He was utterly estranged

from that Asiatic philosophy which declares existence an evil, and the continuance of conscious life a punishment for past sin. He was equally opposed to Scepticism, and to that mild type of Scepticism, called Traditionalism, which, presupposing the incompetence of human reason, ascribes all human knowledge whatsoever of the things of God 'to the faith once given to the Saints of old.' The Schoolman venerated faith, but he maintained that there was also a natural, or rational, knowledge of God; and that sundry truths of religion could be established by philosophical argument. As Scholasticism tended to decay, the number of these truths, said to be philosophically demonstrable, was diminished. To Scotus they were fewer than to St. Thomas, and to Ockham fewer than to Scotus. 'There is, then, a twofold sort of truth in things divine for the wise man to study; one that can be attained by rational inquiry, another that transcends all the industry of reason. To the declaration of the first sort we must proceed by demonstrative reasons that are likely to convince the adversary. But because such reasons are not forthcoming for truth of the second sort, our aim ought not to be to convince the adversary by reasons, but to refute his reasonings

against the truth, which we may hope to do, since natural reason cannot be contrary to the truth of faith. There are, however, some probable reasons available for the declaration of this truth, to the exercise and consolation of the faithful, but not to the convincing of opponents' (*Contra Gentiles*, i. 9).

4. *Static.*—Modern philosophy is the philosophy of change, of phenomena, of perpetual flux. Scholasticism is the philosophy of permanent substantial being. Not that the Schoolmen ignored change, but by preference they rested upon complete existences and achieved results, *e.g.* a perfect morality and a full-grown society, not the development of either. Needless to say how little 'substance' enters into modern thought: it has become 'a bloodless category'; but it was a full, round, plump entity to the Schoolman.

One word on Evolution. The Schoolman, with Aristotle, believed in *abiogenesis*, the development of maggots and reptiles and fish out of mud and decaying matter. They believed in the *ontogenetic evolution* of the human embryo from mere vegetative life to the life of a brute animal, and thence to the life of a rational being. 'The higher a form is in the scale of being,' writes St. Thomas (*Contra Gentiles*, ii. 89; *Of God and His Creatures*, p. 168),

'the more intermediate forms and intermediate generations must be passed through before that finally perfect form is reached. Therefore in the generation of animal and man, these having the most perfect form, there occur many intermediate forms and generations, and consequently destructions, because the generation of one is the destruction of another. The vegetative soul therefore, which is first in the embryo, while it lives the life of a plant, is destroyed, and there succeeds a more perfect soul, which is at once natural and sentient, and for that time the embryo lives the life of an animal; upon the destruction of this there ensues the rational soul, infused from without.' St. Thomas here teaches what is called *ontogenetic evolution,* the evolution of the individual perfect animal from a lower form. Of *phylogenetic evolution*, or the evolution of species, he seems never to have thought. Yet one who held *abiogenesis,* and, with the alchemists, the transmutation of metals, to say nothing of evolutionary potentialities (*rationes seminales*) in primordial matter, which St. Thomas indeed did not hold, but earlier Schoolmen did, such a one could have had no strong *philosophical* prejudice against the possibility of an evolution of species. St. Thomas, with Aristotle, points out a

static series of gradations, or what has been termed 'evolution in co-existence' in the following passage: 'A wonderful chain of beings is revealed to our study. The lowest member of the higher genus is always found to border close upon the highest member of the lower genus. Thus some of the lowest members of the genus of animals attain to little beyond the life of plants; certain shell-fish, for example, have only the sense of touch, and are attached to the ground like plants. Hence Dionysius says: "Divine Wisdom has joined the ends of the higher to the beginnings of the lower"' (*Contra Gentiles*, ii. 68). He has in view the series: plant, animal, man, angel. But he did not derive plant, animal, and man from a common ancestor.

I may add two more marks of Scholasticism, marks, the exaggeration of which went to bring about its decay. It was *legalist* and it was *a priorist*. Law, even more than philosophy, was the favourite pursuit of the mediæval scholar. A knowledge of the canon and civil law was the surest avenue to preferment and wealth. Hence arose a tendency to treat philosophy like law. Aristotle was cut up into texts, which were quoted like texts from the Pandects. A like use was made of the Fathers and Holy Scripture, and, as

time went on, of the great Schoolmen who had been before. The danger of this practice was a neglect of context and spirit, and a losing sight of the intrinsic grounds of the argument. Scholasticism was also *a priorist*, making out what must be in the nature of things. Now it is easy to make out what must be, to our minds, so far as our knowledge goes and our hypothesis extends. The difficulty is in testing our hypothesis by experiment and observation, and widening our knowledge by research into actual facts, unfavourable as well as favourable to our preconceived theory. This rough and tough *a posteriori* work was not much to the taste of some of the Schoolmen, and their speculations suffered accordingly.

CHAPTER IV

DECAY OF SCHOLASTICISM

§ 1. *Ockham and the Terminists.*

WILLIAM OCKHAM, 1280-1347, 'the Venerable Master,'[1] 'the Invincible Doctor,' of the Order of St. Francis, born at Ockham in Surrey, studied at Merton College, Oxford; heard Duns Scotus in the University of Paris, seems himself to have taught at Oxford; was certainly lecturing in Paris 1320-1323; then quitted his chair to turn ecclesiastical Radical at the court of Louis of Bavaria, and write bitter things against Pope John XXII. Ockham reopened the question on Universal Ideas, which had been closed for a hundred years. It is wrong to call Ockham a Nominalist; that is to say, he by no means denied the existence of Universal Ideas in the

[1] *Venerabilis inceptor.* To 'incept' is to *begin* lecturing as Master of Arts. The village of Ockham lies between Woking and Leatherhead. The Invincible Doctor's name is variously corrupted 'Occam,' 'Occham,' 'Okam.'

mind. What he did deny was that they stood for anything specifically common to a multitude of individuals: he argued that they stood for all the individuals to whom they were applicable. He says: 'What is predicated [generically] of many things differing in species is not aught that is of the being of the things predicated, but is one idea in the mind, naturally signifying all the things of which it is predicated.' To judge of this, let us revert to the familiar logical distinction between the 'extension' of an idea, or what Mill calls the 'denotation' of a name, and the 'comprehension' of the idea, or 'connotation' of the name. Extension and denotation take in the individuals to which the idea or name is applicable. Comprehension and connotation take in the notes constituent of the idea, or what is commonly called the 'meaning' of the name in predication. Ockham was too acute to be blind to this distinction. We must not understand him as setting aside comprehension and connotation entirely. What he does commit himself to in the passage quoted is the assertion that only in denotation does our predication extend itself to things outside the mind of the speaker, namely, to the individuals spoken of. What is said of those individuals, in other words, the comprehension or connotation,

'is not aught that is of the being of the things,' it is 'one idea in the mind.' That is to say, Ockham was a Conceptualist. Thus 'men are animals,' meant to him, 'John, Robert, etc., are animals.' But why call them 'animals'? It is a class-name, a convenient label for the lot. But does the label tell us anything? does it connote or mean anything? Yes, says Ockham, it connotes an idea in my mind, an idea of animality resolvable into notes, such as life and sensibility, which again are my ideas. To St. Thomas, and Realists of all shades, this is not enough. It would convert all our predication, and consequently all our science, into an imposing of our own ideas upon objects of nature. To the comprehension of a Universal Idea, they say, there must be something *in rerum natura* answering. That something, Moderate Realists say, is made up of certain attributes, existing separately in every member of the class, yet in each *typical* of the whole class.

Ockham's doctrine is known as *Terminism.* His numerous followers are known as Terminists. They were powerful in the Schools to the end of the fifteenth century. Terminism is not Nominalism: for *terminus* in Ockham is not what we call a *term* or *name*; it is the *universal concept* itself, considered as *a sign of many*

things (*signum plurium*), namely, of all the individuals to which it applies. Terminism means Conceptualism. Though a Conceptualist, however, Ockham was not an Idealist. His Dualism was as distinct as that of the other Schoolmen. He held that we have an intuitive knowledge of individual things; that the first thing known is the individual, a thing existing in real truth outside the mind.

Ockham was a great enemy of *formalism*, or the multiplication of distinctions, so much affected by Scotus. His saying, 'It is idle to do by many things what may be done by fewer' (*frustra fit per plura, quod potest fieri per pauciora*),[1] has gone down to posterity in the form, 'Entities are not to be multiplied beyond necessity' (*entia non sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitatem*), known in the schools as 'Ockham's razor.'

Ockham followed Scotus in diminishing the number of religious truths that can be proved by reason, so throwing more burden upon faith. The danger to religion in this process is that, carried to extremity, it would argue that faith points one way and reason another. This was

[1] The saying is not Ockham's own. It is found in Petrus Aureolus, 'The Eloquent Doctor' (in 2 Sent. dist. 12, q. 1), a generation before Ockham.

the position of the later Averroists, though not perhaps of Averroes himself, that a thing may be true in theology but false in philosophy—the position known as that of the 'two truths.' The main position of Averroes, that of the unity of the intellect, Ockham abhorred, as he abhorred every vestige of the universal *in rerum natura.*

In the Bodleian Library is a quaint old book, printed in 1487, the *Quodlibeta* (we should say the 'Miscellanies') of William Ockham. These are some of the questions: 'Whether it can be proved by reason that there is only one God?' [answer—'No, if by "God" you understand "that which is nobler and better than anything else."'] 'Whether an angel can move locally.' 'Whether one angel can converse with another.' 'Whether an angel can move through vacuum' [answer—'Yes']. 'Whether it can be shown evidently that the intellectual soul is the form of the body' [answer—'No,' against St. Thomas]. 'Whether it can be shown evidently that there is not numerically one intellect for all men' [answer—'Yes,' against Averroes]. 'Whether the exterior act has a goodness or malice of its own' [answer—'No'].

Ockham's worst error in philosophy was his making moral distinctions dependent upon the

will of God. If this principle is pushed to the length of saying that the sole reason why anything is right or wrong, fair or good, reasonable or unreasonable, true or false, is because God has so willed it to be, it involves the ruin of Ethics, indeed of all philosophy.

Ockham in his later life was lamentably disobedient to the authority which he had vowed to obey. But his philosophical writing is shrewd and suggestive. As there were Thomists and Scotists and Averroists, so there were also Ockhamites (Terminists), to the downfall of Scholasticism.

§ 2. *Two Knight-errants of Scholasticism.*

Raymund Lully, 1235-1315, 'the Enlightened Doctor,' also a Franciscan, but of a very different type from Ockham, was stoned to death by Moors at Tunis, and but for his extraordinary writings might have merited the honours of canonisation. His ruling passion in life was the conversion of Moors and the putting down of Averroism. Taking an opposite line to Duns Scotus and Ockham, and agreeing so far with Scotus Eriugena, he maintained that all the truths of religion are demonstrable by reason, even its mysteries. This assertion, however, he counterbalanced by another,

that intellectual knowledge, if not exactly of all things, at least of all things best worth knowing, presupposes faith; and as knowledge mounts, faith mounts with it, above it, apart from it, as oil ever rises above water, to use his favourite comparison. We must not press this statement too far, for Raymund can scarcely have denied all knowledge to men destitute of faith. These two paradoxical statements of Raymund must be taken together, if the author is to be fairly judged. Both may be, indeed both are, absurd, yet not so absurd as either would be in isolation from the other. We have here an excellent instance of the injustice that may be perpetrated by quotation. One should rummage an author through to find whether sayings that offend us may not be counteracted and explained, or limited, by other sayings, or whether they do really indicate the main unqualified drift of the writer's thought.

Raymund's notion of the essential presupposition of faith to knowledge may be accounted for in this way. He wrote as a Catholic. Now, in matters touching religion, a Catholic always argues with prepossessions in favour of faith interwoven with his rational first principles. A confirmed unbeliever has similar prepossessions in

favour of unbelief. Thus, though both appeal to reason, they may reason for eternity and never will agree.

To facilitate that philosophic deduction in which he was so earnest a believer, Raymund invented a 'calculating machine.' Letters and geometrical figures, revolved and combined together, represented the various elements of Scholasticism; and the combinations thus produced suggested syllogisms. Such a machine may co-ordinate ideas, but it does not give them; and the very co-ordinations are apt to be fortuitous and arbitrary.

In his view of the interpenetration of faith and and science Lully had followers, among others the celebrated Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa, 1401-1464. Nicholas Chrypffs was born at Kues, or Cusa, near Treves. An opponent of papal power at the Council of Basle, he became afterwards its most ardent champion and most efficient minister. Nicholas v. created him Cardinal and Bishop of Brixen. In an active life he found time for philosophy. His great work is entitled *Of Learned Ignorance* (*De docta ignorantia*), an expression borrowed of St. Bonaventure. He dwells on our inability to understand God and the essences of things. We cannot understand

those essences, because we cannot understand Him who contains them all. Our highest learning is the avowal of this ignorance. Cusa writes of God much as modern writers have written of the Absolute. God is *coincidentia oppositorum*, inasmuch as in Him all contradictions are reconciled. God is *complicatio omnium*, as in Him the multitude of things is brought to a higher unity. What is implicit in God, becomes explicit in the universe. God created primordial matter, but as that cannot exist by itself (as St. Thomas also teaches), God must be considered the form of all things (denied by St. Thomas, *Contra Gentiles*, i. 26). To save himself from pantheism, which he disavows, Cusa explains that God is in the creature as the prototype of its reality. Then He must be the form exemplar, not the form constituent.

Cusa's 'learned ignorance' may be regarded either in respect of God, or in respect of the things of this universe. In the latter respect, so far as physical science goes, the best physicists now echo his words. The generalisations of physical science are not final, absolute, adequate; they are provisional colligations of facts already discovered, put together under a formula which seems most likely to lead to discovery of further facts. They

are working hypotheses, not unfounded in the past, full of promise for the future. But in the future they may be discarded, and other colligations, tying together new discoveries, will help the inquirer to still further research. Even to the end of time, the ultimate nature of things seems likely to remain a mystery. Who shall finally say what is electricity, or what is life?

To say that God is the union of opposites, sanely understood, as we must suppose Cusa to have meant it, does not mean that such opposites as sweet and bitter are *formally* in God, else they would remain opposite, and be incompatible; but that they are in Him *eminently*, as in their exemplar and efficient cause. Though God is absolutely one, no sooner does He begin to be copied by creatures, placed by Him outside Himself, than plurality sets in. God is one, but virtually manifold. He is complete actuality in Himself, but in His creatures He is capable of infinite potential expansion, this expansion of Him in creation ever falling infinitely short of that great, all-perfect Exemplar, which is God Himself. All this should be borne in mind in reading Nicholas of Cusa.

In his earlier writings St. Thomas delighted in insisting, as Cusa does, on the negative character

of our knowledge of God. He has a chapter (*Contra Gentiles*, i. 14) 'that in order to a knowledge of God we must use the method of negative differentiation (*via remotionis*),' *i.e.* telling what God is not. 'By such negations He will be further and further distinguished from everything besides Himself, and then there will be a proper notion of His substance, when He shall be known as distinct from all; still it will not be a perfect knowledge, for He will not be known for what He is in Himself.' Again, 'we cannot take in of God what He is, but what He is not, and how other beings are related to Him' (*Ib.*, i. 30). Again (iii. 49) he quotes pseudo-Dionysius as saying: 'We are united with God as with the Unknown'; and explains, 'which comes about in this way, that we know of God what He is not, but what He is remains absolutely unknown (*penitus incognitum*).' In later life St. Thomas wrote more cautiously on this subject. He says in the *Summa Theologiae* (p. 1, q. 13, art. 2): 'Of the names that are predicated of God absolutely and affirmatively, as 'good,' 'wise,' and the like, some have said that all such names are invented rather to remove something from God than to posit anything in Him. But this account is unsatisfactory. And therefore we must say otherwise, that such

names do signify the divine substance, but fail to represent it perfectly.'[1]

Later Schoolmen complete this teaching by observing that while names that connote imperfection, as 'earth,' 'dull,' 'animal,' in no way apply to God; names significant of pure perfection, as 'wise,' 'just,' do apply to Him, and that after a more excellent fashion than they apply to any creature. God is *wise*, but not under the limitations of human wisdom. He is *just* with such justice as befits the Supreme Being, and so of the rest. If St. Thomas, Cardinal Cusa, or other Schoolmen, sometimes are reluctant to allow our having *positive* knowledge of God, what they wish to deny is our having *adequate* and *univocal* knowledge of Him. We know Him only through imperfect analogies.

Cusa deserves to count among the Schoolmen. He was a dualist, although at times verging on pantheism. He was observant of Catholic orthodoxy. He held to matter and form. After him we may mention one who has been called 'the last of the Schoolmen,' Gabriel Biel, 1425-1495. His *Collectorium*, well known and often edited, contains nothing original, but is justly considered one of the most methodical and faithful exposi-

[1] *Of God and His Creatures*, pp. 13, 221.

tions of the 'terminism' of William Ockham. In Ockham and Terminism, and worse still, in Compendiums of Terminism, Scholasticism pined away. Humanism and the Renaissance, Neo-Platonism, Averroism, Cartesianism, and finally Physical Science, reigned in her stead.

CHAPTER V

CAUSES OF THE DECAY OF SCHOLASTICISM

SCHOLASTICISM may be said to have decayed because it no longer attracted the best intellects of Europe. Men's thoughts came to be taken up with other things—with wars and the new growth of nationalities, with the schism in the Papacy, with the great scourge known as the Black Death, with Greek art and literature, and that revival of Graeco-Roman tastes known as the Renaissance; with the theological questions raised by Luther and Calvin about faith and predestination and sacraments and papal power; and, when the strifes of the Reformation were more or less composed, with Baconian and Newtonian physics, finally, with the commercial interests awakened by the discovery of the New World. Again, though Scholasticism, *i.e.* Scholastic Philosophy, is not theology, yet it was ever the attendant (*ancilla*) of Catholic theology. The Schoolmen were practically all Churchmen; you never find

a lay Doctor. Consequently, as the Catholic Church lost ground, Scholasticism lost also. All the manifold causes that led up to the Reformation were concurring causes likewise to the unmaking of Scholasticism.

These, however, are extrinsic causes. An intrinsic cause must be sought, and the question put: Was Scholasticism exhausted as a philosophy? Had it found out all that was to be found out by its methods and on its presuppositions? Any answer attempted to this question must be premature. An *a priori* answer will not do. The experiment is being tried with a new Scholasticism, and we must abide the result. Two remarks may be made meanwhile: one as regards the method of the ancient Scholasticism, the other as regards its presuppositions. In point of method the ancient Scholasticism lies open to the charge of having been overmuch *a priori*, over-neglectful of experiment, of research, of observation of nature at first hand, of linguistic studies, of history, of documentary evidence. As we have seen, Albertus Magnus and Roger Bacon nobly rebut this charge. Still, a system, like a personal character, has the defects of its qualities; and if the Schoolmen excelled, as they undoubtedly did excel, in abstract reasoning, they must have been

under the temptation to neglect *a posteriori* evidence. Theirs is not the only school that lies open to this charge. Who shall say that Neo-Kantism has not been overmuch *a priori*? Who shall deny that our German friends do at times evolve prodigies and portents out of their inner consciousness?

Then as to presuppositions. Some of the presuppositions of the ancient Scholasticism were indubitably false. We refer of course to ancient notions of physical science, and particularly of astronomy. No one who has not read much of Scholastic authors can conceive how far the Ptolemaic astronomy entered into their psychology, their metaphysics, and even their theology. Certainly Scholasticism does not stand or fall with the Ptolemaic conception of nine concentric crystal spheres, with the earth in the centre, one sphere carrying the moon, another the sun, five others a planet each, the eighth sphere all the fixed stars, while the ninth was the *primum mobile* imparting circular motion to all the rest.[1] One may remain a good Scholastic, and abolish all that. Even St. Thomas had his doubts, at

[1] This scheme is outlined in Plato's *Republic*, x. 617, and was the special delight of Neo-Platonists, and through them and the Arabians, of Scholastics. Plato's Sirens were replaced by Angels.

least about the further developments of the plan—the eccentrics and epicycles, invented to account for the retrograde motions of the planets. He writes of these contrivances: 'The suppositions that these astronomers have invented need not necessarily be true; for perhaps the phenomena of the stars are explicable on some other plan not yet discovered by men' (in *Lib.* ii. *de Coelo*, lect. 17). 'The reason alleged does not sufficiently prove the position; it only shows that when the position is assumed, the effects follow naturally. Thus in astronomy the system of eccentrics and epicycles is argued from the fact that the assumption enables us to explain the sensible phenomena of the motions of the heavenly bodies; this argument, however, falls short of a convincing proof, for possibly the phenomena might be explained on some other supposition' (*Sum. Theol.*, i. q. 32, art. 1, ad. 2).

St. Thomas, nevertheless, like the other Schoolmen, built upon the Ptolemaic astronomy a whole system of Providential government of the world. An angel by Divine command moved the outer sphere, the *primum mobile*; that moved the other spheres; and the spheres between them *influenced* (they did not altogether effect) all the changes that take place in the sublunary world,

short of man, and many changes in the body of man himself. The Schoolmen refused to attribute all that goes on upon earth to the influence of the heavenly spheres: first, because they stood up for free will in man; secondly, because they saw (what not all philosophers have seen) that to deny all activity to material substances on earth, and reduce them to pure passivity, was tantamount to abolishing them out of existence; thirdly, because, holding the course of events in the sublunary world to be contingent and variable, they would not ascribe it to a necessary cause, such as they took the motion of the heavenly spheres to be.[1]

Although for the accidents of his body, and his relations with material things, man came under the influence of the spheres, yet for his will and understanding he came under a peculiar Providence. His will was directly moved by God (*Contra Gentiles*, iii. 89). How St. Thomas under-

[1] 'The movement of the heavenly bodies [*i.e.* of the crystal spheres which carry sun, moon and stars] is uniform [*semper est eodem modo*]. If then the effects of the heavenly bodies on these sublunary bodies were produced of necessity, the phenomena of sublunary bodies would be uniform. But they are not uniform, but happen only for the most part. Therefore they do not happen of necessity.'—(*Contra Gentiles*, iii. 86, n. 3). This characteristic bit of ancient Scholasticism is explained in *Of God and His Creatures*, notes on pp. 184, 254.

stood this divine motion of the will became the theme of contention between Thomist and Molinist in the sixteenth century. St. Thomas curiously shrank from asserting a direct influence of God upon the understanding of man, apparently because he was reluctant to play into the hands of Avicenna and Averroes (*Contra Gentiles,* ii. 74, 76: *Of God and His Creatures,* pp. 142, 143, 148). St. Thomas therefore holds that our understanding learns of God through the angels. Thus 'elections and motions of wills are immediately disposed by God; human intellectual knowledge is guided by God through the intermediate agency of angels; while bodily things that serve man, whether within or without his body, are administered by God through the intermediation of angels and of the heavenly spheres' (*Contra Gentiles,* iii. 91).

The heavenly spheres have melted into thin air, together with all scholastic speculations founded upon them. Concerning angels, every one conversant with the writings of the Schoolmen is aware how large a proportion of their pages is filled with discussion of these pure immaterial 'forms.' The fountainheads of such discussion were (*a*) Scripture, (*b*) Neo-Platonism, (*c*) the human intellect taken as a basis for *a priori*

speculation what a pure intellect must be. All the Schoolmen much insisted on the distinction between intellect and sense. Pure sensation made the brute, pure intellect the angel, and man was the link between. Modern thought attends curiously to the brute creation, and to the physiology of the human body; it believes in experimental psychology; it never attempts to contemplate intellect apart from brain and nerves. On grounds of pure reason, it asks, what have we that can be called knowledge even of the very existence of angels? The angels have taken flight from Catholic schools of philosophy; the rustle of their wings is caught by the theologian's ear alone. Whether philosophy has lost by their departure, it is not for these pages to say. St. Thomas would have counted it a loss. The angels entered essentially into his scheme of the cosmos, and were indispensable transmitters of thought to human kind. 'Our intellectual knowledge,' he says, 'must be regulated by the knowledge of the angels' (*Contra Gentiles*, iii. 91). Modern Psychology is serenely oblivious of the fact. Catholics, no doubt, still believe in angels, dread the evil ones (devils), and pray to the good ones who now see the face of God. Catholics also believe that good angels

are often the vehicles through which 'actual grace,' that is, warnings and impulses in order to salvation, descends from God to men. But that man owes his ordinary knowledge of mathematics, chemistry, sanitation, railway management, to any action whatever of angelic intelligence upon his mind—is there any man living who thinks so? If all that St. Thomas meant was that we should try to penetrate beyond the surface evidence of the senses, that is what every scientific man endeavours to do in his view of nature—to see *e.g.* in a bar of iron what a pure intelligence would see there, that is the effort of science. But St. Thomas meant more than that (cf. *Of God and His Creatures*, p. 252), and some are beginning to suspect that he is right.

One word on the process of formation of universal concepts, as laid down by the Schoolmen. The impression made on the sense by the sensible object is universalised by the 'active intellect,' or, if you will, by the activity of the intellect. So universalised, it is received in the 'potential intellect,' or in the potentiality of the intellect. Thus universalised and received, it is called *species intelligibilis impressa.* There can be no *species impressa* except in presence of the object. But, further, the mind recognises, and

as it were confirms, and stores up even away from its object, the *species.* So recognised and adopted, the *species,* or impression, becomes what is called *species intelligibilis expressa,* or *verbum mentale* (the mind's word). By the *verbum mentale* the mind says to itself of the *species,* 'that's it.' See for further elucidation Dr. Maher's *Psychology,* ed. 4, pp. 306-313; *Of God and His Creatures,* pp. 38, 122. This theory is too purely psychical to be affected by physical science.

The Scholastics of the seventeenth century, unfortunately, refused to reconsider anything. They saw no possibility of any accommodation of the Scholastic philosophy and the new physical theories that were riveting the attention of the world. They were too timid to declare, what to us is a truism, that metaphysics and psychology have absolutely nothing to do with astronomy. Their schools had flourished, they considered, under planetary influences, and under planetary influences they should remain. The adventurous comet of 1618, as Boileau sarcastically wrote, was to be recalled within the concavity of the moon, and forbidden to go spying out the mysteries of the higher heavens. Very other was the attitude of Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas and Friar Bacon to the physical science

of their day. Poor science it was, no doubt, but they took care to have the best of it, the most recent, what was then the most assured. And they took care not to lean too much upon the uncertainties of physics, as is proved by the fact that their metaphysical system can be detached from the Aristotelian physics with which it was so closely interlinked. The possibility of this separation the seventeenth-century Schoolmen did not discern; they loathed the new learning, and their old learning became a byword of contempt. How many educated men still derive their notion of a Doctor of Scholastic Philosophy from Molière!

CHAPTER VI

REVIVAL OF SCHOLASTICISM

§ 1. *The Revival of the Seventeenth Century.*

THE one hundred and fifty years from the middle of the sixteenth to the end of the seventeenth century is known in history as the period of the Counter-Reformation. During that period the Catholic Church consolidated her position in the countries that remained to her after the great revolt, and planted herself by vast missionary efforts in new lands. In Spain and Italy she quite recovered, and even improved upon, the position that had been hers in the Middle Ages. With this revival of Catholicism, the dying embers of Scholasticism were kindled into a new glow in the countries just named. Two Religious Orders, the Dominicans and the Jesuits, brought their schools to a level which recalled the brighter days of the now decadent University of Paris. We will take some note of two great Jesuit Doctors of this era.

Gabriel Vasquez, S.J., 1551-1604, taught at Rome and Alcalá, mainly theology, which he has bequeathed to us in a great commentary on the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas, with philosophy interspersed. If Suarez was the Aristotle of the Society of Jesus, Vasquez was the Plato. He and Suarez were rivals in the schools. Vasquez is always good reading, brilliant, suggestive, more lively, too, than Suarez, but less sure-footed. By this time the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas had replaced the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard as the text-book in the schools. At the opening of his commentary on the *Summa*, Vasquez has an interesting defence of scholastic theology against the allegations brought against it in the sixteenth century. Many of his remarks may serve as an apology for scholastic philosophy in our time.

'We cannot deny that there have been in the School very many who have treated questions with frivolous reasons. . . . This is not the fault of the science, but was the misfortune of the times, in which minds were not so cultivated, nor arts so elaborated, nor books so abundant. Now that there is a better supply of books, and much greater exercise of intellect, our scholastic theology is daily enriched and treated with the consideration that it deserves. . . . Secondly,

many, even Catholics, inveigh against scholastic theology in this way. There are doctors seemingly born for disputation, contentious, party men, who care less about the investigation of truth than about the defence of their own School, and of their own Master to whom they have sworn allegiance, to the no small injury of theology and truth. . . . But that is no fault of Scholasticism, it is a fault of character. . . . Francis Victoria, a disciple and keen defender of St. Thomas, used to say (and he is followed also by Melchior Canus), that the authority of St. Thomas ought so far to prevail as to suffice for us, if a better reason be not forthcoming; still, that the words and reasons of so great a Doctor were not to be accepted without discrimination and examination. Nay, if St. Thomas said anything not altogether probable, that we ought to imitate the Saint's own modesty and industry, in neither disparaging the credit of the ancient Doctors, nor adopting their opinion if reason urged to the contrary. Wherefore Victoria wishes us not to be so attached to the doctrine of St. Thomas as to think it a crime to depart a hair's-breadth from any reason, ground, opinion, or conclusion of his.' On this, Vasquez quotes St. Augustine: 'I should wish no one so to embrace

my opinions as to follow me except on points in which he sees that I am not mistaken. On that very account I am now writing my Retractations, to show that I have not in all things followed myself.' Vasquez goes on: 'But you see people who of set purpose endeavour to refute St. Thomas's doctrine, and then fancy they have done gloriously when they have uttered a pronouncement against an opinion of his. These are worthy of no light reprehension, and undoubtedly are stopping their own way to the discovery of truth. The above-mentioned Thomists, then, teach that such disinterestedness and sincere desire of truth should rule our treatment of matters doubtful and probable, not belonging to dogmas of faith, that, for all our deference to the authority of Blessed Thomas, reason, nevertheless, maturely pondered, should hold the first place, wherever such reason can be found. . . . Some are offended at scholastic theology for its style—its uncultured mode of speech, its phraseology mean and vulgar, laden with barbarisms and solecisms. These are the votaries of rhetoric and eloquence; men who delight in words rather than in things; who neglect the investigation of the natures and properties of things and the enucleation of difficulties; men who hate the

very name of Scholastics. Herein they are far from following the teaching of their darling Cicero, who, mentioning Epicurus in his book *De Finibus,* writes: "The style of this philosopher does not offend me, for he puts into words what he means, and speaks plainly within my comprehension; and yet, if a philosopher brings eloquence, I scorn it not; if he has it not, I do not much miss it." . . . This barbarism and unskilful language of the Schoolmen is to be put down rather to the fault and misfortune of the age than to their subject. The subject would not lose its force and instructiveness by being treated in a purer style. The subject, however, does not require great abundance of words and flow of eloquence, but words few and sufficient to untie the knot of the difficulty, a style plain and brief, yet not obscure.'[1]

Scholastic and modern philosophy differ in

[1] Of which style St. Thomas is a master. Mill in the opening of his *Logic*, quotes Sir W. Hamilton: 'To the Schoolmen the vulgar languages are principally indebted for what precision and analytic subtlety they possess.' How many modern systems of philosophy would fall to pieces, were they enforced with the subtlety and clearness of the scholastic method! How profound the groans of the English reader over the jargon of German-translated and German-thought philosophies! On the other hand, how much are Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley, Mill, and Huxley indebted for their success to their manly English style!

their orientation. Not every reference to God can be said to belong to (dogmatic or revealed) theology. God is to some extent known by reason; and to that extent He is an object, nay a principal object, of philosophy. Scholasticism, then, and the philosophy of our day differ in this, that Scholasticism is ever referring to God, modern philosophy has for its centre, man. In which particular, perhaps, it may be found that modern philosophy stands to Scholasticism as geocentrism to heliocentrism in astronomy. Here is a specimen of what we may call 'heliocentric' or 'theocentric' philosophy from Vasquez. He is inquiring whether God dwells in the great void beyond what Lucretius calls 'the flaming walls of the world,' beyond the outermost of the heavenly spheres of the Schoolmen, beyond the gigantic bean-shaped enclosure which (modern astronomers think) is the finite outline, measured in light-years, comprehending all the stars and nebulae, all the matter that is. The question involves an inquiry into the nature of Space, which surely no philosopher can neglect. Vasquez then (*in* 1^m^, *disp.* 29) answers the question in the negative. For one thing to be in another, the thing itself must be real, and that in which it is must be real. But beyond the bounds of the

universe there is no reality, but sheer nothingness. God is not in nothingness. Vasquez objects that another universe might be created beyond the bounds of the present; but not surely in nothingness; therefore that ultramundane continent, or recipient, of creation is something other than mere nothing. Also that the whole universe may possibly be in motion (a very pertinent objection); hence if God is confined to the universe, He must move with the universe. To the last allegation Vasquez replies that motion must be between two assignable points; but assign any point, and immediately God is there; therefore He cannot be said to move from point to point, not even by extrinsic denomination. For the rest, his reply is not satisfactory. He admits the possibility of the whole universe being in motion in a straight line. On such issues, he remarks, 'many of these curious questions serve to sharpen wits.' This particular discussion remains of interest to every one who, not content with the Kantian 'forms of thought,' persists in the inquiry, What is space?—that question which weighed on the mind of Herbert Spencer in the last months of his life. Space indeed, rightly considered, is no small argument of the being of a God. The argument is proper to philosophy.

Francis Suarez, S.J., 1548-1617, 'the Excellent Doctor,' the greatest theologian of his Order, wrote copiously on nearly all subjects philosophical and theological. How far he should be regarded as a faithful exponent of St. Thomas, and how far as an original writer with views of his own, has been matter of much dispute. His great work on philosophy is the bulky volume of his *Metaphysica*, almost a life's work to master. Some idea of it may be formed from the following account of the thirteenth Disputation on 'the material cause of substance,' a characteristically scholastic topic. This then is the outline of Suarez's argument. According to the Aristotelian idea of generation and corruption, the generation of one thing (*e.g.* fire) being the corruption of another (*e.g.* tow), material substances are ever passing one into another. 'All sublunary things, so far as their nature and composition goes, are transmutable one into another.' The seventy or more chemical elements which are not transmutable one into another had not yet been registered. It was thought that all bodies were made up of fire, air, earth, and water, and that these were mutually interchangeable. The alchemists laboured strenuously to convert baser substances into gold. This convertibility of substance with substance sup-

poses some common subject remaining under all conversions: otherwise 'the thing that is corrupted would perish to the whole extent of its being, and the other thing that begins to be would be made to the whole extent of its being, if no common element remained underlying both. Thus the one would be annihilated and the other created, which is an impossibility to nature.' There must then be one common subject permanently underlying all natural transmutations: that underlying subject is primordial matter (*materia prima*). And what is that? Is it everywhere one and the same, or are there manifold varieties? Manifold, say the Atomists, Democritus, and his school. Atoms to them are primordial matter, and atoms are of all shapes and sizes, and infinite in multitude. Atomism is rejected by Suarez on two grounds; first, because an infinite multitude is impossible: secondly, because 'in that system of philosophy, the forms of natural things would be, we might say, artificial only, being figures arising from the various positions and orders of the atoms, and so there would be no true substantial generation and corruption.' The atoms in fact would be the only true substances, and they would be imperishable. But Democritus was wrong, and Suarez with him, in

supposing that the building-stones of a finite world need be infinite in multitude. Primordial matter then is of one sort only. It is not one of the four elements, for they pass one into another, primordial matter remaining unchanged under the transaction. It is no corporeal, complete substance at all, atomic or otherwise. Were it a complete substance, it would have a substantial form. But nothing can have two substantial forms together. And primordial matter underlies all material substance. Its form, then, if it had one, would be the one sole form in all material substance. Thus all material substance would be permanently of the same species; one substance could never pass into another by change of substantial form. Primordial matter is not a substance; it has neither quantity nor quality nor quiddity (essence) of its own; it is in potentiality to all substantial forms; it is ready to turn into anything. Nevertheless, 'primordial matter is not absolutely nothing,' although it is 'nearly nothing.' Were it absolutely nothing, 'it could have no true and real function in nature; in which case things corrupted and said to be resolved into matter would be resolved into nothing, and things produced out of matter would be produced out of nothing; and so matter would

serve no purpose in processes of generation and corruption, since it would not serve for the avoiding of a perpetual creation and annihilation. Matter, therefore, is something of a reality, especially when conjoined with form and entering into the composition of a compound.' Primordial matter is no accident, it is an appurtenance of substance, it is really distinct from form, it has an essence and existence of its own, albeit in dependence on form. It is pure potentiality and something besides, as an Irishman might say:—in allowing this shadowy 'something besides' Suarez inclines to Scotus rather than to the Thomists. There follows a subtle inquiry into the part played by primordial matter in causation. The heavenly spheres have primordial matter in their composition, but matter of another sort than is found in this sublunary world. The disputation ends with a lengthy disquisition on the heavens.

The theory of primordial matter is fundamental in Scholasticism. All scholastic writers treat of it at length, although they differ over it. Nowhere does Scholasticism trench more upon the domain of physics than in this, its central dogma, of matter and form. The brief summary given shows how much Suarez had to learn of the modern physicist. The atomic theory, as it

stands to-day, will require to be handled otherwise than as he deals with Democritus. The hypothesis of there being one common mother-stuff underlying every variety of material body requires a confirmation which it has not received from Suarez. It is indeed a doubtful hypothesis. And the doubt will have to be cleared up, if ever it is cleared up, not by abstract arguments going upon the obvious phenomena of daily life, such as the burning of tow, but by all the elaborate apparatus now at the command of the chemist and the electrician: even the highest methods of mathematical calculus may be called in to aid. Verily there is work for the twentieth-century Schoolman who intends conducting a thoroughly philosophical inquiry into *materia prima*.

§ 2. *The Leonine Revival of* 1879.

Leo XIII. made two great pronouncements: one on Civil Government, the Labour Question, and Socialism; the other on Scholastic Philosophy, notably the philosophy of the greatest of the Schoolmen, St. Thomas Aquinas. On this latter subject is the Encyclical *Aeterni Patris*, dated 4th August 1879. The Pope deplores the decay of philosophy, even in the Catholic schools, since the sixteenth century. Philosophy has become a

house of confusion, every man babbling his own conceits; nothing remains fixed and certain, there is no foothold for science to climb by. His Holiness continues:—

'We all see how the society of the family and of the State itself is endangered by the pest of perverse opinions. Society would be much more peaceful and far more safe if in our Universities and Schools there were taught a sounder doctrine, more in accordance with the teaching of the Church. Such a doctrine is found in the volumes of Thomas Aquinas. Thomas's arguments on the true notion of liberty, now running into license, on the divine origin of every sort of authority, on laws and their force, on the paternal and equable rule of the Sovereign Pontiffs, on obedience to higher powers, on mutual charity amongst all men, and the like subjects, all these his arguments are fraught with mighty and invincible strength for the overthrow of those principles of new-invented law, which are plainly perilous to the order of society and the public safety. All human branches of learning should anticipate and hope for advancement, and promise themselves much assistance, from the restoration of philosophical studies which We contemplate. Fact and constant experience testify that the liberal arts

have been then most flourishing, while philosophy has been held in honour and her judgment maintained in wisdom; on the other hand the decline of philosophy into error or futilities has led to the neglect, almost to the obliteration, of the other parts of a liberal education. Even the physical sciences, now so prized, and held everywhere in such singular admiration for the splendid discoveries to which they have led up, far from having any injury to expect from the restoration of the philosophy of the ancients, may look to derive great good. For their profitable exercise and increase it is not enough to observe facts and study nature, but when the facts are ascertained, the student must rise higher, and make his aim the careful recognition of the natures of corporeal things, and the investigation of those laws and principles on which depends the order of phenomena, their unity in variety, and their mutual affinity in diversity. To such investigations scholastic philosophy is likely to bring a wonderful measure of power and light and aid, provided it be wisely taught. It is a calumny on that philosophy to say that it is opposed to the advance of the physical sciences. The Schoolmen, following the opinion of the holy Fathers, everywhere taught in their Anthropology that only by sensible

things is the human intellect raised to the knowledge of things incorporeal and immaterial. Hence they readily concluded that nothing was more profitable for the philosopher than a diligent inquiry into the secrets of nature, and a long and profound study of physics. St. Thomas, Blessed Albertus Magnus, and other leaders of the Schoolmen, for all their study of philosophy, spent much of their energies in seeking to acquire knowledge of the facts of physics. Many of their remarks and maxims on this head have met the approval of modern authorities, and are acknowledged to be in accordance with the truth. Wherefore, at this very day, many eminent professors of physical science avow openly that there is no real conflict between the certain and approved conclusions of modern Physics and the philosophical principles of the School. While, then, We pronounce that every wise saying, no matter who said it, every profitable invention or contrivance, no matter who contrived it, is to be willingly and gratefully taken up, We earnestly exhort you all, Venerable Brethren, for the defence and adornment of the Catholic faith, for the good of society, for the advancement of all sciences, to restore the golden wisdom of St. Thomas and propagate it far and wide to the best of your

power. "The wisdom of St. Thomas," we say; for if there be in the scholastic Doctors any excessive subtlety of inquiry, any inconsiderate teaching, anything less consistent with the ascertained conclusions of a later generation, in a word, anything in any way improbable, we have no mind to hold that up for the imitation of our age.' The Pope concludes with a warning against pseudo-Thomism: 'But to the end that a supposititious doctrine be not imbibed instead of the true, or the adulterated for the genuine, take care that the wisdom of Thomas be drunk in from his own fountains, or at least from those streams which, in the certain and unanimous opinion of learned men, may be said to flow thence still uncontaminated and undefiled; but from streams that are said thence to flow, but really are swollen with foreign and unwholesome contributions, take care to keep your young students' minds away.'

§ 3. *The Future of Scholasticism.*

These wishes and commands of Leo XIII. have been repeated by his successor, Pius X. Will they be ever carried out to any considerable extent? Will Scholasticism ever overleap the walls of the Seminaries? Will it remain a philosophy for the clergy only, a vestibule to dogmatic

theology for those whose profession it is to be theologians, or will it largely imbue the Catholic laity also? Will it take a hold upon the universities? Will it ever colour, as Kant and Hegel at this day colour, the thought of the writers in our magazines? Any ordinary educated man who spent a week with St. Thomas, Duns Scotus, and Suarez, would come out, I fancy, crying: 'No chance; Scholastic tomes are only less archaic than Babylonian bricks; Scholasticism is as the traceable old bed of a river, which the water once filled, but to which it will never return; the current of modern thought has turned irrevocably another way.' On the other hand a great thinker has written: 'If ever there was a power on earth who has had an eye for the times, who has confined himself to the practicable, and has been happy in his anticipations, whose words have been facts and whose commands prophecies, such is he in the history of ages who sits from generation to generation in the chair of the Apostles.' Nevertheless, a little further on, the same writer adds: 'The past never returns' (Newman, *The Idea of a University*, Discourse I.). If Newman is right, we may augur two facts for the future: (1) Scholasticism will return; (2) It will not return as it was in the Middle Ages. In

other words, what will come back will be Neo-Scholasticism.

Like a thirteenth-century church, a parish church still, in daily use; an ancient monument, and something besides; a present-day house of prayer, answering to the needs of a twentieth-century congregation, and for that purpose refitted, repaired, and restored, Scholasticism must be vindicated from the ravages of time, and the still worse ravages of injudicious handling; its main plan and outline, old and true, must be retained; it must remain essentially the building that it was; but it must receive new furniture, and be enlarged to take in new discoveries. And whatever there is in it, old indeed, but proved to be inconsistent with truth, must be removed. The reader has much misread these pages, if he takes Scholastic philosophy to be one and the same with the deposit of Catholic faith. Scholasticism is not 'the faith once given to the saints' (Jude, 3). It is a product of human reason, like any other philosophy. It has not come down from heaven, but man made it, and man may change it. It is irreformable, to a Catholic, only so far as its conclusions happen to coincide with dogmas taught by the Church. Hence there is no impiety in the idea of a Neo-Scholasticism.

We are not called upon simply to re-echo St. Thomas, or any other mediæval doctor, piling up quotations, adding nothing and altering nothing. St. Thomas himself did not go to work in that way upon his predecessors, no, not even upon Aristotle. We are called upon to follow a living, not a dead Thomas; to say now what St. Thomas would say, were he now alive.

Any pretence to tell what St. Thomas now would say, were he alive, must be illusory unless it be grounded upon an accurate and adequate knowledge of what he actually has said in the writings which he has bequeathed to us. The one safe foundation of Neo-Thomism, then, is Thomism, by which I here mean a thorough hold on the philosophical system of St. Thomas as it appears in his works. A pioneer and founder of Neo-Thomism will not in all things remain a Thomist, but he must begin with being a Thomist in the sense just defined. He must have caught up with the Saint before he can go beyond him. His goal must be the twentieth century, but his starting-point the thirteenth. He must carry Thomas faithfully through seven centuries, and in his furthest and most daring innovation be still Thomistic.

He must unsay without reserve whatever it is certain that St. Thomas, were he now living, would unsay; and that is whatever is in manifest contradiction with the valid and firm conclusions of science, *e.g.* Ptolemaic astronomy, the doctrines of the four elements, the four humours, and astral influences. It will be found on trial how the metaphysics and psychology of St. Thomas stand clear of these errors, wonderfully clear, considering how rooted those errors were. He, indeed, continually refers to them, and accepts them for truths, but they serve him rather as illustrations than as arguments. Of illustrations, taken from the physics of their day, the works of all the Schoolmen are full. Those writings seem in consequence more archaic and more out of date than in substance they really are. Sometimes the illustration might be dropped; sometimes it might be replaced by another drawn from modern physics; sometimes we may retain it, remembering that it is but the first outward seeming of things that we have to regard, this especially when the illustration is from light and colour; sometimes, too, it must be confessed, the scholastic metaphysician has been led astray by the analogy of a mistaken physics, and there we have to correct him. The Neo-Thomist, however, will

prefer to draw his illustration from the newer physics. When a philosopher refers to a physical phenomenon even for an illustration, we expect him to regard it rather with the eye of science than with untutored sense.

On the other hand, there are clear fixed principles which, living in no age of the world, would St. Thomas ever unsay. He would never unsay any of the dogmatic teachings of that Church which has numbered him among her Doctors. An anti-Catholic Thomist is a contradiction in terms. Nor would he consent to enter upon any line of thought, which his far-sighted intelligence discerned to be such as must by inevitable logic, sooner or later, place the thinker who followed it up in contradiction with Church teaching. Hence he would be no friend to the Kantian, the Neo-Kantian, the Hegelian synthesis. Between Hegel and St. Thomas, between Kantism and Scholasticism, there is a truceless war. They cannot amalgamate, there is no *via media* between them: their first principles are in mutual contradiction, they will never 'meet in a higher unity.' Neo-Thomism must, at least, be scholastic; that is to say, it must be dualist, it cannot bear any tincture of Idealism, Monism, Pantheism. Its God must be a transcendent

God, 'high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens.' He must be a Creator, and His creative act must be a free act. He must be one and the same, complete in Himself, whether the world exists or not. There must be no being anywhere that is not of Him. Between His Being and that of created things the resemblance must not be generic, but only analogous; He being the great Ideal, of which all things else are inadequate copies. This philosophy is extremely unpopular in the world at present. Scholasticism, however, cannot court popularity by forswearing itself. If you are a Monist, then you are not a Thomist, nor a Scotist, nor even a Terminist. You are outside the School.

Neo-Thomism must also retain the impress of Aristotelianism. St. Thomas sometimes consciously went beyond Aristotle. On the whole, he was more concerned to square Aristotle with Christian teaching than to square himself with Aristotle. On the questions of Divine Providence and the condition of the soul after death, it must remain at least doubtful whether Avicenna and Averroes or St. Thomas were better exponents of Aristotle's mind. Still less can the Neo-Thomist be in all things Aristotelian. Nevertheless, apart from theology and apart from physics, Aristotle

is an author whom it is peculiarly dangerous to contradict. He has a knack of proving right upon further study. Eschewing Kant, the Neo-Thomist will stand for Aristotle. He will study 'what is,' not 'what we are compelled to think.' On the subject of matter and form, or 'hylomorphism' as it is called, the Neo-Thomist will strongly hold that in man the soul is the form, the body, the matter. He will hold it on philosophical grounds, seeing that this doctrine fits in with modern biological research far better than the 'boatman-in-boat' theory of Plato.

The extension of hylomorphism to the whole of nature, and notably to the constitution of inorganic bodies, is a much more dubious speculation. If, apart from theological issues, Scholasticism and all Scholastic writers have one common favourite notion, it is the notion of primordial matter (*materia prima*). On this the Neo-Thomist has the option of two courses. Either he may declare, as some have done, that the notion is founded upon obvious data of sense, and being built upon what is plain to all men is independent of scientific research, or he may endeavour to find *materia prima* underlying atoms resolved into electric currents, or into

whatsoever other elements, extended or unextended, the atom may finally prove resoluble. Which of these two courses the Neo-Thomist will take, and if he take the second, what will come of it, we are wholly unable to forecast. But he will have to make up his mind decidedly on *materia prima*.

Another choice, likewise beyond our prediction, will have to be made in psychology, on the retention or discarding of the 'active' and the 'potential' intellect. Certainly the mind does form universal ideas, and as certainly does it store them. Intellect in man, then, must be active and must be potential; but unless we get beyond this verbiage —and the scholastics did go much further—we are not beyond Molière's *vertu soporifique.* One schoolman of no mean ability, writing in a French Review, has urged the abandonment of speculations on 'active' and 'potential'; he would make the permanent self, underlying transient impressions, the first intellectual idea grasped by the mind; thence he would derive further ideas of 'being,' 'substance,' 'cause,' and the like. But we are now merely indicating questions, not solving them.

The proof of the existence of God will be a main consideration for the Neo-Thomist.

Having before him Aristotle, *Metaphysics* xi. [al., xii]; *Physics*, vii. viii., along with the Ptolemaic astronomy with its *primum mobile*, St. Thomas wrote:—'Aristotle proceeds to prove the existence of God from the consideration of motion as follows. Everything that is in motion is put and kept in motion by some other thing, It is evident to sense that there are beings in motion. A thing is in motion because something else puts and keeps it in motion. That mover, therefore, either is itself in motion or not. If it is not in motion, our point is gained which we proposed to prove, namely, that we must posit something which moves other things without being itself in motion, and this we call God. But if the mover is itself in motion, then it is moved by some other mover. Either then we have to go on to infinity, or we must come to some mover which is motionless; but it is impossible to go on to infinity, therefore we must posit some motionless prime mover.'[1]

It still remains to be proved that an immovable Prime Mover can be no other than a Personal God.

To this argument a modern physicist might

[1] *Contra Gentiles*, i. 13, translated in *Of God and His Creatures*, p. 11.

object that while it is true, by the Newtonian law of inertia, that a thing is in motion because something else has put it in motion, by the same law it is untrue to say that a thing is kept in motion because something else keeps it in motion: once set going, the thing keeps in motion of itself: the intervention of an external cause is required, not to keep it in motion, but to stop or alter its motion. Secondly, it will be said, the argument supposes this principle, that nothing moves another thing except by virtue of itself being in motion. That principle is contrary to the Newtonian law of gravitation. One planet attracts or pulls at another equally well whether itself be in motion or not; and the like of repulsion. It happens, indeed, that everything in the universe is in motion, but that is an accident to the mutual attractive or repulsive powers of particles of matter one on another. If all parts of the universe had been created at rest, motion would have at once ensued among them by their mutual attractions and repulsions. Here is no need of any prime mover. Motion is like conversation: it springs up by mutual interaction. The buzz of conversation that begins as soon as grace has been said at a meal, does not necessarily start from the head of the table. We

need no prime talker, nor prime mover either. If it is contended that not mere random motion is here alleged, but the movements of an orderly world, the elements of which must have been arranged in positions of advantage from the first—if we pass from motion to the energies of the universe, and invoke the principle of the conservation of energy—then more may be made of the argument. The discussion has been drawn out thus far, not in malevolence, but as an invitation to the Neo-Thomist to go deep into modern physics, if he wishes to vindicate a favourite argument of his master.

The hope of Scholasticism as a philosophy for the future seems to rest on its alliance with Physical Science. Let scholastic metaphysicians be physicists, or with the physicists, and they may yet win back the sceptre from Hegel. Nor are the two families unconnected. The true ancestors of the physicists of to-day are not the Humanists of the Renaissance, but the Schoolmen of the thirteenth century. For Scholasticism did make it its endeavour, by its own method and according to its own notions and opportunities, to inquire into nature. Moreover, our physical science sadly needs the co-operation of some sound metaphysics; for though the

two provinces be distinct, yet they are adjoining, and professors of physical science are continually making incursions into metaphysics, not always with the happiest results.

Neo-Scholasticism will require great leaders; or if the age of great personalities be for ever past, then the organised co-operation of many ordinary men in all seats of learning, knowing one another, and acting together. Nothing great will be done by spasmodic efforts: nothing will be achieved by second-rate minds working in isolation. The chief centres of Neo-Scholasticism at present are Louvain and Rome. Perhaps there is more of the *Neo* in the University of Louvain, and more of the *Scholastic* under the shadow of the Vatican.

Scholasticism in the Middle Ages, as we have seen, was a clerical philosophy. Dante, indeed, is an instance of an illustrious layman, highly conversant with Scholasticism; but the students who thronged the halls of mediæval Paris and Oxford, intent upon philosophy, were chiefly clerics. Philosophy, like so many other things, has been laicised since then. Will Scholasticism ever be laicised, or will it remain a property of the Seminary?

The future of Scholasticism is an interesting

study, because upon Scholasticism, to all appearance, so at least Popes have thought, depends in great measure the hopes of the Roman Catholic Church ever recovering the ascendancy which she has lost over the intellect of mankind.

CHAPTER VII

SCHOLASTIC ETHICS AND POLITICS

§ 1. *The Ethics of the Schoolmen.*

THE Ethics and Politics of the Schoolmen are founded upon the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics* of Aristotle. Nevertheless, being Christian, the School did not depend upon the ancient Greeks for ethical teaching so much as for logic and metaphysics. The Aristotelian ethics stood alone, complete, but isolated. The Schoolmen added to them a science of Deontology, and thereby brought them into connection with Theology. They added to Aristotelian virtues such notions as Duty, Obligation, Sin, a Sovereign Lawgiver and Judge, Reward and Punishment in a life to come. They brought ethical conduct under a law, and for that law they provided an adequate sanction. Aristotelian Ethics make a system of Eudaemonism, but stop short of Deontology. Aristotle points out the road to

happiness (*eudaemonia*), but makes little or no attempt to characterise that road as the path of duty (*deon*). If the fellow does not want to be rationally happy, Aristotle would say, he is a fool, and must be expelled my lectures. The Schoolman says more. The man who will not take the road of rational happiness is a law-breaker. He breaks a law, formulated indeed by his own conscience, but imposed by an authority from without, which is the authority of the Supreme Reason, God, Creator and Lord. In refusing the way of virtue and rational happiness man not only plays the fool, he commits sin. And sinning, he must be punished. This punishment is radically *natural*, inasmuch as by sinning and depraving himself, man becomes unfit for rational happiness, and stores in his frame the elements of misery. This is an ethical consideration. The punishment is, further, a *positive* infliction, proceeding from the will and judicial sentence of the offended Legislator. This is a theological consideration. And similarly of happiness and reward. To do right conscientiously and systematically is to build up habits of virtue; it is to form to oneself a character of goodness; it is to become *naturally* a fit subject for happiness, and *positively* to

merit an award of happiness from the just Eternal Judge.

About the best thing that Scholasticism has done is the perfecting of the Aristotelian scheme of happiness, and the adaptation of it to the Christian promises, contained in Scripture and Church tradition, as set forth in many a glowing page of St. Augustine. Plato and Aristotle, Augustine and Aquinas, here felicitously join hands. Plato with his vision of Beauty in the *Symposium,* Aristotle with his account of the crowning happiness of contemplation in the tenth book of the *Ethics,*[1] Augustine on the vision of God in the latter books of his *Confessions,* finally St. Thomas, *Contra Gentiles,* iii. 17-63, all come together in anticipating the prophecy, *We shall see him as he is* (1 John, iii. 2): *And they shall see his face, and his name upon their foreheads* (Rev. xxii 4).

St. Thomas altogether takes up the Aristotelian argument, that man's last and highest happiness consists in *theoria,* or the contemplation of the understanding for contemplation's sake; for *theoria* alone fulfils the requisite of perfect happiness, to be self-sufficient, not useful to a

[1] Also in *Metaphysics,* xii., where he speaks of God as the Ideal after which the whole universe yearns.

further end, and to be proper to man as man, or rather, proper to man in respect of the highest element of his being. The only point in which this contemplation fails to meet requirements is this, that, taking life as it is, our contemplation cannot be continual, it is fitful and uncertain. To this objection Aristotle coolly replies that it only shows that happiness in full perfection is beyond the reach of man to attain; he must make the best of a bad adventure, and realise this ideal of happiness in such transient and inadequate fashion as he may; better an hour of that than fifty years of any other occupation; better, no doubt, an eternity of it, but eternity is not to be had; man must be content in a mortal life to play the immortal. This we do by philosophising, pursuing science and scholarship for its own sake, not for any vulgar utility. In fact Aristotle places happiness precisely in what are now called 'useless studies.' And because few men have leisure and ability for such pursuits, Aristotelians say that few men can be happy. As the flower and fruit is but a small part of the plant, and still the plant may be said to be for the flower and the fruit, so the vast organism of human society exists for the sake of these few 'useless' but happy students. Philosophers are the flower of

humanity. This view, however, did not wholly satisfy Aristotle's great exponents, Greek and Arabian, Alexander and Averroes, each *honoris causa* named 'the Commentator.' They looked for the realisation of his *theoria* not to any ordinary study of sciences, but to a mystical union with a higher Intelligence. Upon these aspirations St. Thomas writes: 'Alexander and Averroes laid it down that the final happiness of man is not in such knowledge as is possible to man through the speculative sciences, but in a knowledge gained by conjunction with a separately subsistent Intelligence, which conjunction they supposed to be possible to man in this life. But because Aristotle saw that there was no other knowledge for man in this life than that which is through the speculative sciences, he supposed man not to gain perfect happiness, but a limited happiness suited to his state. In all which investigation it sufficiently appears how hard pressed on this side and on that those fine geniuses were. From this stress of difficulty we shall escape in positing, according to proofs already furnished, that man can arrive at true happiness after this life, the soul of man being immortal. In this disembodied state the soul of man will understand in the way in which pure

spirits understand. The final happiness of man, then, will be in the knowledge of God, which the human soul has after this life according to the manner in which pure spirits know him' (*Contra Gentiles*, iii. 48).[1]

If any one would see for himself the blend of Aristotelian with Christian virtues, of virtues with commandments, of moral deformity with sin, he may read it at length in what is called the *Secunda Secundae* of St. Thomas's *Summa Theologiae*.[2] One remark about Casuistry, or the study of cases of conscience, principally in view of the practice of the confessional. The principles of the science are to be met with in the great Schoolmen, but the developments are not due to them. Casuistry interested the human mind chiefly in the seventeenth century, when the star of Scholasticism had paled before Descartes.

§ 2. *The Politics of the Schoolmen.*

For a thousand years and more—for some fourteen centuries in the East—the State to the Church meant the Roman Empire. There were, to be sure, barbarian kings many and lords many,

[1] Cf. *Of God and His Creatures*, p. 220, where the passage is annotated.

[2] Or in an English dress in my *Aquinas Ethicus, or the Moral Teaching of St. Thomas.* Two vols. Burns & Oates.

Persian, Gothic, Hun, Saxon: these were but faint copies, or distorted caricatures of the Majesty that dwelt, or had dwelt, in Rome. There was no king but Cæsar, however he might be girt with a Persian scimitar at his side, or swing in his rude hand a German battle-axe. Did not the ninth-century monarch of Wessex or Northumbria inscribe on his coins *basileus*, the Greek name of the Roman Emperor, to imply that he was the Augustus Cæsar of Britain? The treatment that the Church experienced at the hands of the Roman State for three centuries was an uncertain tolerance, interrupted by outbursts of fierce persecution. Then the Empire became officially Christian, and at times did the Church more harm by its patronage than it had done by its hostility. Still Church and State hung together, and when the barbarians broke up the Empire of the West, Church missionaries went among them bearing in their right hand the Gospels and in their left Roman law and Roman social institutions. When a great Christian ruler of many peoples appeared in the person of Charlemagne, the Church gladly bestowed upon him, as a sacred gift, the consecration and name of Roman Emperor. He was declared 'Cæsar, the unconquered, ever Augustus.' When his pos-

terity lapsed into feebleness, the Church in the middle of the tenth century, a hundred and fifty years after Charlemagne, saluted a new Roman Emperor in the person of Otto the First.[1] Thence to the end of the eighteenth century there was ever a Holy Roman Empire by the side of the Holy Roman Church. On the whole the two powers got on ill together. In the most flourishing period of Scholasticism, Christendom was distracted by the strife of Papacy and Empire. We have seen a prince of the School, William Ockham, abandon his professorial chair to turn Imperial partisan. The political science of the Schoolmen, then, was conditioned by the political situation of their times. In their idea Christendom somehow was one, not one religious body merely, but one political body, a Christian commonwealth. True, there were various princes and nationalities, but in an age of feudalism no very close coherence of parts was thought necessary to form a kingdom, no very definite unity of authority, no intense centralisation. The Roman Emperor was in theory the political chief of a united Christendom. The English, of course, were insular, and claimed that their island was beyond

[1] Otho II. some called him, remembering Salvius Otho's brief tenure of power in the year after the death of Nero.

the bounds of the Empire: they were tolerated as outer barbarians, amiable men with queer notions; and besides, from the time of John, their land was held to be a fief of the Holy See: indeed all islands, Ireland as well as England, were considered by some canonists to be appanages of the See of Rome. While Scholasticism was at its best, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, kings indeed went to war, and their vassals followed them, but nation had not yet risen against nation: the very name 'nation' did not signify a distinct State, but only a difference of race, or less than that, merely of geographical position. Thus Picardy was a 'nation' at the University of Paris; and in that of Oxford there were two 'nations,' the northern and the southern English, Scotland going with the former, and Ireland and Wales with the latter. When what we call nations emerged towards the end of the fifteenth century, Scholasticism was already in its decline. The best mediæval scholastic intellect was never given to a Europe such as lies before our view. Consequently there is a certain archæism in Scholastic Politics. The Hugo Grotius of the Schoolmen is Francis Suarez, with his treatise, *De Legibus*, and that was written in the early seventeenth century.

The antithesis before the Schoolman was not Church and State: it was Pope and Emperor—in England and France, Pope and King. These were the two luminaries in the firmament of heaven, the greater and the lesser. Whence the greater came, every one in those days knew: but what was the origin of the lesser luminary? From the devil, said some; it was a consequence of the Fall; had we remained in paradise, there would have been no kings. 'They all put on diadems, and their sons after them for many years, and evils multiplied upon the earth' (1 Maccabees, i. 9). It was remembered how Rome owed its origin to the asylum, said to have been opened by Romulus on the Palatine for robbers and murderers. Nevertheless it was admitted that kingly power was a necessity in our present condition, and must be endured, as the necessity for wearing clothes, and consulting physicians, which things would not have been had we kept our innocence.

No, said others, the king's power is a holy thing, the gift of Christ to Peter; and Peter's successor has given it to the Emperor, and so to Christian Kings who owe the Emperor reverence. So said Augustinus Triumphus and Alvarius Pelagius, and sundry others, but no great School-

man took this view: it is censured by the poet of Scholasticism, Dante, *Purgatorio*, c. xvi.

The Roman Jurists gravely asserted that all Imperial and Royal power is the gift of the People. The People, whose is the sovereignty by original right, finding themselves too unwieldy a body to administer it efficiently, have made it over by a *lex regia*, 'a king-making law,' to the Emperor. He is their *vicarius*, or representative.[1] Whether this power had been transferred to the Emperor without reserve, whether it had been transferred irrevocably or could for any just cause be resumed, was a point on which the Jurists were not agreed. This theory of the original sovereignty of the people came into remarkable prominence in the Jesuit schools during the century following the Reformation. At that epoch Protestant Sovereigns entirely, and even Catholic Sovereigns partially, had possessed themselves of ecclesiastical power. The theory, then, was resuscitated by Bellarmine and Suarez in the

[1] *Populus ab initio communem potestatem habuit, et postea ab eodem in plures transfusa est, in principes, consules, praetores, imperatores. . . . Quod enim principi placuit legis habet vigorem, id est vicem; nam cum Imperator proprie sit vicarius, ejus censura, licet non sit lex, legis habet vigorem.* Placentinus, *Summa Institutionum*, 1, 2. I owe this quotation to the kindness of the Reverend A. J. Carlyle, M.A., of University College, Oxford.

interest of the Church, to curb the pretensions of those princes of reigning with God-given prerogative, the immediate, irresponsible ministers of the Most High. Suarez was by no means the inventor of this theory, which is exposed in his work, called *Defensio Fidei,* written against James I. in 1612. This ancient theory, be it observed, knows nothing of any Social Contract to live in society: it agrees with Aristotle in taking man to be a social or political animal by nature: it is not the theory of Rousseau.[1]

This theory of the Jurists must have been well-known to St. Thomas. He neither repudiates nor explicitly accepts it. He deals with the further question, how there came to be such a thing as authority at all. In his answer he closely follows Aristotle's *Politics,* giving them a theological turn. Authority is necessary to human society, and society is a necessity of man's nature. In solitude and isolation from his fellows man is not a man, as a dead hand is not a hand, except in an analogical sense. A hermit must be either a brute or an angel: he is not in the category of

[1] The theory of the Roman Jurists was based on history, inasmuch as the Roman Republic actually preceded the Roman Empire. In the hands of Suarez it became a truth of political science.

human kind. Man is a social animal more than any bee or ant. Bees and ants are gregarious, but man is social: he absolutely requires to be a member of a rational community. Nor is the community of family life sufficient: families must form societies, and the society of families is ultimately the State. One State, one authority. Anarchy is the destruction of the State, and thereby the ruin of the individual. The individual can only thrive as the citizen. So far Aristotle and St. Thomas.

Suarez and modern Schoolmen continue thus. We regard God as the author of nature, and whatever is necessary for human nature to work out its essential development is the ordinance of God. So then civil society, and its consequent civil authority, is the ordinance of God. The powers that be are ordained of God. To disobey them is to disobey Him who is the author of that nature to which they are a necessity. God forbids anarchy as severely as He forbids any excess against temperance. Thus the civil ruler is of God, not in virtue of any positive institution or revelation from heaven, but by virtue of God having created a nature to the proper unfolding of which the State and the civil ruler is indispensable. In whose hands the civil power shall

reside, that is not argued here. That depends upon history and individualising circumstances. The distribution of power will be various, but some civil power there must be. The specific ratio of civil authority is from God: the individual who wields that authority is of God only inasmuch as in him, here and now for the present, such civil authority becomes an actuality.

The assignment of a rational or natural basis to the State sets aside two of the theories that have been mentioned. It sets aside the notion that the State is of the Evil One, or is a necessary evil, the consequence of the Fall. Not the mere evil, but the good of human nature it is that bids the civil ruler take and hold his place. Also it overturns the notion that civil government is a property of Christianity as such, and therefore belongs in chief to the living Head of Christendom, the Pope, whose vicars, or vassals, all kings must be. Not as a Christian, but as man simply, is man a social animal for the purposes of this life. The State is a natural institution, not a supernatural or spiritual entity: the State, therefore, as such, does not belong to the Pope, just as land, houses, money, and other property are not all given over into the hand of the successor of St. Peter. To Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's. Nevertheless

'the Church laid it down that, while the civil and ecclesiastical polities existed in different orders and for different purposes, and were so far forth independent of one another as their orders and purposes were different, yet the spiritual order was superior to the temporal, salvation of more consequence than political well-being.'[1]

'Man is not subservient to the political community to the extent of his whole self, all that he is and all that he has,' writes St. Thomas. Not throughout the whole range of his nature is man a political being. He is a citizen and more than a citizen. He is, or may be, philosopher, poet, artist, father, friend; and in all these capacities he is something over and above a limb of the State. The State has neither ability nor right to control his thoughts. If he has an immortal soul, he belongs already by anticipation to a world in which there is no State. He shall outlive the State, and must look forward to the time when the State for him shall be no more. Even then while he still lives one of its components, he cannot wholly be contained in the State. This doctrine involves a certain *aloofness* of the individual

[1] *Political and Moral Essays*, Benziger, New York, pp. 161 *sq.*, where more is said of the 'indirect,' or incidental power of the Church in temporals — not to be confounded with the late sovereignty of the Roman States.

from the State, and prevents his entire absorption in it. There are traces of this aloofness in pre-Christian philosophy, much more in Christianity, and therefore in Scholasticism.

This train of thought brings us within sight of some hope of removing from Scholasticism a reproach, which more than any other cause has prejudiced the modern mind against it, and is the greatest obstacle to its propagation. I mean the reproach of being pledged to foregone conclusions, of being tethered to orthodoxy like a captive balloon to the earth. This reproach grows greater with the lapse of time, as the attaching ropes are multiplied and made stronger by new condemnations of error and new definitions of faith. The reproach may be removed by this reflection, that definitions of faith fall upon judgments, not upon reasonings; not upon speculations, but upon assents. It is a rule of the Higher Philosophy to speculate freely, but to assent cautiously, to think much but believe little. Faith challenges our belief, not our logic: it does not say, *this is proved,* but *this is.* You may call Scholasticism, or any orthodox philosophy, a captive balloon, but for tentative ascents, for exploration and reconnoitring purposes, the ropes that hold it stretch to infinity. You may see and meditate all that can

be said for any condemned doctrine, provided you do not hold the doctrine itself.[1] You may sound all the depths of Hegelianism, and see with your mind's eye all the gloomy visions of Schopenhauer, provided you hold fast to the Nicene Creed and Vatican Council, and do not deny, however little in some respects you may be able to justify, the Providence of God. Nor is it quite exact to say that the dogmas of faith are forgone conclusions. They are forgone truths. They are not presented to our belief as conclusions. We may never be able to reach them by way of conclusion. Some are confessedly inaccessible to conclusive argument, as the doctrine of the Triune God. Some may be accessible, but I cannot find the way. There is a way up the Matterhorn, others have gone to the top, I start and fail. I have to take the feasibility of the ascent on the word of others. So with such a doctrine as the immortality of the soul. I have not the least doubt that the soul is immortal: my faith tells me so. But I am as free as any other man in judging of the value of the arguments for immortality. I may search them all, and condemn them all; and, with Scotus, I

[1] See, for instance, the ample and distinct exposition of Humanitarianism, the Creed of Antichrist, in Father Benson's book, *The Lord of the World.*

may have to fall back upon my faith as the one sure guarantee of my immortality. A truth of faith can never be in question; but my ability rationally to vindicate a given truth of faith is a very open question indeed. I am satisfied with the word of God; but my own philosophical, or critical and historical speculations, may fail to satisfy me, at least for the present. Perhaps I may reason better to-morrow: meanwhile I will believe, even to-day.

A Catholic will say: this free philosophical speculation, trying all conclusions, but holding aloof from assents, where the word of the Church forbids them, is a dangerous game. It is dangerous. Alpine climbing is dangerous, and fox-hunting. All the stronger efforts of man's body and mind are fraught with danger, not excluding the paths of higher sanctity. There is danger of broken limbs, of lunacy, of intellectual pride and apostasy. If Scholasticism is to revive—and Popes have bidden it live again—the Neo-Scholastic who shall lead the movement of revival will need to be a man of great faith, fearless speculation, and absolute reliance on the word of God.

'What makes against the faith, either as a consideration in the mind of the believer, or in the

way of exterior persecution, augments the merit of faith, so far forth as it reveals a will more prompt and firm in the faith. Therefore also the martyrs had greater merit in faith, not receding from the faith for persecutions; and likewise men of learning have greater merit of faith, not receding from the faith for the reasons of philosophers or heretics alleged against it.'—(St. Thomas, *Summa Theologiae,* 2^{a}—2^{ae}, q. 2, art. 10).

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